



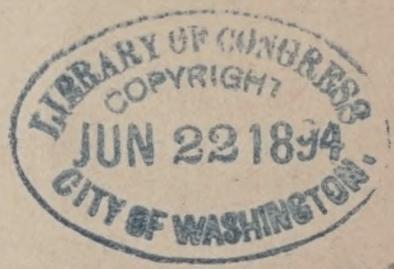


JUST PLAIN FOLKS

A STORY OF "LOST OPPORTUNITIES"

BY

E. STILLMAN DOUBLEDAY



BOSTON
ARENA PUBLISHING COMPANY
COPELEY SQUARE
1894

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Arena Press.

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DEDICATION.

WITH an earnest desire for our most kindly fraternity, I dedicate this book to "My NEIGHBOR"—whether he be on "his own," just over the fence, or whether "his lot" be in the common highway with mine—where we "move on" together.

I am not a dumb animal; I want to talk. I wish that my neighbor would heartily shake my hand and speak to me. But "we have not been introduced to each other," and society says we must wait for that formality. Singularly enough, we must remain strangers, because some third person singular has not said to him and to me, "My dear neighbor, this is *your* dear neighbor." How absurd! We have been meeting and passing all these years, and looking into each other's faces curiously. I have "wondered" what I could do for him; still more have I wondered what he could do for me. I *need* to know him better. Both of us know that God is "our Father," and that the earth is our mother; yet we wait for Society to introduce us—*brothers*.

To my brother or sister—my neighbor—who Society says must remain a stranger to me, but whom *I am commanded to love*, I may speak from the leaves of a book.

I have a story to tell, of some plain folks, some common lives, with which we cannot be too well

DEDICATION.

acquainted. The knowledge of such lives may help my neighbor, and may incline him to help make their lives, all lives, happier and better.

I dedicate this story of common people to my neighbor in Australia or in the planet Mars—if we can find him there and talk with him ; to my neighbor at the machine, in the garret, in the slums, or in the brothel —where society has put *her* ; in the cell, the cabin or the castle—where we have put *him*—my neighbor. It is not for me to say that I love my neighbor as I do myself ; but I may be permitted to say that I love my neighbor.

Rejoice ! The world is awakening ; hope is renewed. Roseate hues of the light of truth are athwart the sky ; the DAY dawns. Neighbor, to you and to me it is a *good-morning*.

A PRELUDE.

(*Allegretto Animato.*)

MAN—grandest of creatures! Unto him has been given dominion and power over earth, air, and sea. With the special gift of his reasoning intelligence, he may reach out into the heavens and gain utility of wisdom from the stars. With but one timid, short step taken toward his attainable possibilities, yet has he harnessed the light, the heat, the chemic properties of the sun to serve him. Imponderable forces in earth, in air, and under the sea fly round the globe as his messengers, or with marvelous speed carry him hither and thither, or bring and lay at his feet the fairest fruits of every clime. He utters speech; and, outrunning the earthly measures of time, it circles a world in a few seconds. He looks curiously into the stellar spaces of the infinite with bold confidence, and hopes to hail other spheres in their courses—to converse with signaling souls in Mars. His listening ear catches the laugh and the wail of all the world. The very heart-throb of his “Neighbor” at the antipodes he hears. He pierces the earth, and from living arteries of its rock-locked depths spout up oil and crystal water. A thousand sleeping forces—some felt, some almost in sight—await his higher intelligence, his further search, his call; all potent of marvelous betterment for man. How magnificently grand are his pos-

sibilities ! How bounteous and inexhaustible the field of *opportunities* which "hath been given unto all the children of men !"

(*Andante Doloroso.*)

In vain, anxious men are *seeking for opportunities* to live comfortably. Famine—a slow death of the underfed bodies and souls of men—is wreaking vengeance for the violated laws of Nature.

Hearts are heavy, hope gives way, lines of care, anxiety and fear are written on *human* faces—the faces of millions of men, women, and little children, whose opportunities are lost to them.

JUST PLAIN FOLKS.

CHAPTER I.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY. A STAR OF HOPE. TIME PASSING.

By a New England country roadside an old farmhouse, low-roofed and browned with the storms and sunshine of years, stood with its gable towards the street. Great wings spread out to the right and left. An extension to the rear made kitchen, pantry and woodshed. The quaint, homely structure seemed to hover, like a mother-hen, over the brood confided to its keeping. There were daffodils and quill-daisies, spider-lilies and grass-pinks, in beds either side of the path to the door; hollyhocks, stiff and prim, flaunted their red or canary-yellow blooms with gaudy pride down by the gate; all the old-time shrubs and vines were planted in Puritanic precision about the yard, or trailed their flowers in untended sweetness over trellis, post and porch. Two hours ago the summer sun had climbed up the gable, had kissed the chimney-top last, and then dropped down behind the western hill. The solemnly silent night had turned down both great lights of heaven, and the earth had bade her children rest.

It was half-past nine on a July night, a starry and

moonless night ; only the chirp of the crickets and the forever unsettled dispute of the katydids broke the calm. Hay-odored air, as it swept around the porch, picked up perfumes of honeysuckle, sweet-brier and balm, and wafted them to the windows and open doors of the house.

The good farmer people were soundly sleeping the sleep of the weary; under the slant ceilings of the farm-house chambers.

With half-opened eyes a collie dog dozed on the steps, ready to awaken the household with his loud barking and to frighten into hasty retreat any night marauders ; though Fido would probably yelp his first round of barks, bristle the hairs on his back and then run to the kennel behind the house to finish his threats in a series of muttering growls at that safe distance.

A low-burning lamp gave out soft light in the great, square, old-fashioned parlor ; and here sat courting as true and worthy a pair as love ever made radiant with inspiration of hope. A kiss at the gate, a pressure of the hand, and vows of constancy—all treasured memories—trifles, full of promise, had strengthened their hearts to highest hope and ambition ; such as love has inspired in the hearts of men and women ever since Adam and Eve courted in the garden of Paradise.

The parlor was tidy, simply furnished and wholesomely clean. A great Boston rocking-chair, with feather-filled cushion of chintz, swayed back and forth, holding within its widespread arms a precious burden of pinky-brown womanhood—Theoretta Vick. Neither pretty nor plain, but good-looking ; a face of such

sweet, frank naturalness that the play of emotions over it was more than charming—it was fascinating. She had blue-gray eyes that in rest looked thoughtful and just a trifle sad; shining hair of a yellowish brown, waving a trifle at the temples, but nearly straight; a carriage of natural grace, and a figure of easy lines. Such was the eldest of the five daughters of Farmer Vick.

A straight-backed, old-fashioned mahogany chair was near her, and in it, looking affectionately at "Thetty," yet with a trace of sadness in the look, sat John Hardhand, second of the three sons of Worthy Hardhand, whose farm joined Farmer Vick's on the north and east, and, taking a considerable sweep around to the westward along the south hill, ended with a wide stretch of marshland at the river. John Hardhand was at this time twenty-nine years old, and Thetty nearly twenty-six. He was a well-built, sun-browned, vigorous man—a living image of strength restrained. Some vertical lines in the forehead between his dark-brown, deep-set eyes, and two or three well-defined lines at the mouth corners, betokened intelligence and habits of thought unusual among men dwarfed and restrained, bound to the clod, by the vocation of farming.

"No, Thetty," said John; "we cannot be married this fall, as I had so earnestly hoped. I see it all now, as a fate beyond our control. We must wait at least another full year."

The rocker that held her flew nervously back and forth, and partly expressed the emotions that welled up in the heart of Thetty Vick because of this hope deferred. She slowed down the furious pace of her rocking and, stopping at last, held out her hand to John, which he took in his own, as a mother might

grasp her babe's little hand when its life seemed slipping over the brink out of her reach. "John, my good, true John," she said, "I can wait till a year, till years, till a life goes by, if it must be so, and you be true. I had hardly hoped to marry, had dismissed the thought, until the new hope came with your love. I shall never think of marrying, except to marry you—only you. But what new obstacle confronts us now?"

He gently released her hand and, interlocking his own hands behind his head, rested it in their palms, and with elbows spread out, as if to fly away in prospecting thought, gazed abstractedly toward the ceiling while he pictured the past and present, and drew from the future such comfort of hope as he could.

"You know, Thetty," said John, "of the mortgage on father's farm? It is now eight years since he has paid anything on the principal, which before that time he used to reduce a little every year. The mortgage matures, and is due, in September next. The bank people, who hold the mortgage, have always said that father might renew the mortgage indefinitely if he desired to do so; but now, Mr. Opolee, president of the bank, who is also a proprietor of the Scarborough Mills, is building a new stone dam across the river at the narrows, below Henchman's basin. The engineer's survey shows that the back-water will cover all our marshland and about a third of the north meadow. The pond will submerge about sixty-eight acres of our land. Mr. Opolee offers pa twelve dollars an acre for it, which, amounting to eight hundred and sixteen dollars, is sufficient to pay this year's interest on the mortgage and five hundred and sixteen dollars of the principal. Father has been much distressed this year with the

fear that he would not be able to save enough out of all our hard work to meet the interest ; which he has never yet failed to pay. Mr. Opolee says that the new dam, and the flooding of that land is necessary to store up water for the increasing needs of the mills, and he must have it ; that if father will not sell him the land at the price he offers, some other owner of the land will do so, for the bank will not renew the mortgage unless there is at least two hundred dollars paid on the principal ; otherwise it will be foreclosed.

"I know from his insinuations that, if we don't sell him that land, the mortgage will be foreclosed anyway, unless it is paid entirely, which cannot possibly be done. And what remains for us to do but to yield to the power he wields? With the system of drainage I had planned I could make that sixty-eight acres of marshland the richest and best soil on the farm. Pa owes me three hundred and fifty dollars on his note, for labor done on the farm since I came back. He offered to sell the marshland to me at twelve dollars an acre, paying off his note in that way, and would take my note for the remainder—four hundred and sixty-six dollars—at five per cent. interest on easy terms ; say, a hundred and twenty-two dollars a year and interest. On such terms I could easily pay it out of the proceeds of my crops from the land. Father made me that offer for the purpose of giving me a start ; and it would also ease his finances. I think Mr. Opolee must have learned from some source of father's proposition to me, and that he based his offer to father on that information. You can see, Thetty, there's no alternative but to accept Mr. Opolee's terms, or fare worse. And all those bright plans and pictures you and I have made fall

flat." And his chest rose and fell with a silent but deep-drawn sigh.

"No, John," said Thetty, "no; the picture is always there, and we will live in the present love for each other, which fills and rounds out our lives, and the picture of what is to be, while we make new plans for a reward sure to come to earnest effort for so worthy a purpose."

"But, Thetty," said John, "I had built so carefully and had measured the future so certainly that this comes like lightning from a clear sky. I had hoarded the remnant of my Western venture—the four hundred dollars I brought back with me from Dakota—and I proposed to employ it in a drainage system on that marsh. Once drained, aerated and mulched, that land would make the best tobacco land in Connecticut. A tariff has been put on cigar wrappers which practically prohibits the employment of Sumatra wrapper tobacco, and American smokers will be forced to pay a tremendous price and large profits to the few tobacco raisers along the river bottom-lands of Connecticut which is the one spot in the United States where good wrapper tobacco can be raised. I had carefully estimated that from next year's crop I could construct my curing barns, build a snug home up by the hill road, fit it up to your taste, Thetty, take a honeymoon-trip to New York with you, and have four or five hundred dollars besides; more than enough to pay father's note. All that was easily possible out of one crop of wrapper tobacco from that marsh. But, somehow, Mr. Opolee seems always to get there first, and now, as in his purchase of the park site in Scarborough last year, all the dainties go to him and his sort, and only the dust

of their chariot-wheels comes back to us, to blind our eyes and befog our minds and fill us with wondering awe of ‘the *mighty*.’ And whether it be lands or factories, railroads, banks or tariffs, all the plums of profit fall into his basket. Either he is exceptionally smart and we are pitifully stupid, or something, somewhere, in our present civilization is radically wrong.”

“Don’t despair, dear; you’re a good and worthy man, John. It is too bad that you also cannot find room at the top, for you are stronger and wiser and better than the best of them. When I think of Opolee and Riff, Mr. Lord and all that class, and then think of you, I could almost adore you, John Hardhand, for your greater manliness, worthiness, wisdom and goodness. The world shall know you some day for what you are, as I know you now. And then our brightest hopes shall be realized.”

“Poor Thetty,” John replied, “your heart misleads your judgment; love has made you blind, and your heart’s ideal has pictured in me what isn’t there. I all too sadly feel, and know, that I am not wise nor cunning nor crafty, like Mr. Lord, but am only earnest and zealous; and, above all else, Thetty, I mean to be honest, and will be true to my convictions. When cunning leads the way toward success, my conviction of what is right steps into the path to confront me and cries out, Halt! If the road leads over the heads of other men, trodden down, that I may march on to victory at such cost of conscience. Such success is impossible to me. I cannot willingly advance myself by stamping others down; nor accept the survival of the strongest or the most unscrupulous as a ‘survival of the fittest.’ Because I cannot fit such a fiendish doctrine

to my moral nor religious sense—my sense of common justice—I am robbed of nearly all hope, for I see the whole world of men in a battle for life pitted against one another, grabbing at the spread food of the ‘Father’s table,’ calling it right that first come should be first served, and that the devil should take the hindmost—he who comes next after the first, the children of to-morrow.”

“Since you distrust my judgment, John, and somewhat discredit my estimate of those Scarborough people and of yourself; since you think my love has blinded me, I am tempted to undeceive you. I shall let you into a little secret, known here only to Maggie, sister Maggie, and myself. Maggie is not overfond of house-work, nor handy at it; she hasn’t a mind to see the dignity of it, nor does she exalt it upon the pedestal of honorable duty. She calls it drudgery. She sews or crochets with tolerable patience, but scrubs the floor only when she is ashamed to be idle while her four sisters are at hard and dirty work. Mother and five daughters, with no son and brother in the family, makes the house-nest overfull of girls, and Maggie feels she can be spared from work which she doesn’t like overwell to do work more to her taste. She has a worthy desire to be less dependent on pa, who has his hands full to meet all our women’s wants and to hire all the farm help besides, which of course he has to do. When Maggie went to the Scarborough school of technology, she learned stenography and typewriting, and got a tolerable knowledge of Durwent’s system of book-keeping. Maggie is of an affectionate, sympathetic and sensitive nature, but she is timid, and lacks confidence in herself. She was anxious to try to get employment

at Scarborough in some of the business offices or the bank, and was afraid to go alone. So she confided her secret to me and urged me to go with her to sustain her courage and relieve the embarrassment of going alone on such a mission. I went; and it is out of the experience of that visit to the wealthy employers, the business men, of Scarborough that I pass judgment on them. As a class, they are neither broadly educated, wise, nor of a superior order of manhood or ability. Cunning they have and self-confidence, but no confidence in others. They rely upon advantage over others, and the duty, the business duty, to seek it, take it, and use it at every opportunity. Their thoughts and methods are really so unworthy that they must be hidden and secret, as they are wrought in secret, or all would fail them. The frank, open candor which belongs to the highest manhood is impossible to them, would be ruinous to their schemes. While they use with profit to themselves an exterior of cultured courtesy, they fail to conceal from the most careless observer their weak conceit, born of their material prosperity, that they are of finer and better clay than less successful men; and each measures himself by his own financial success, no matter how he gained it, while he loftily criticises the immoral methods by which his compeers have won their success."

"I have thought much the same, Thetty," John replied, "but of course we are more or less prejudiced, and our thoughts are born more of conjecture than of knowledge. Such men are aloof from such as I, and of their inner lives little is known by the poor, whom they exploit with a masterly hand. Indeed, Thetty, I am sur-

prised that, with the experience of only a call, you, with a woman's quick intuition, have reached almost my own conclusions, although I have met these men and done business with them many times."

Thetty looked up at him with a little conceit of pride as she continued, "I imagine that to two unmarried, work-seeking women, as we were, who with modest dignity held these masters at greater distance than they wished, but still came asking favor, begging work, the real character of these men was more nearly disclosed than usual. There are doubtless many men more worthy; but those we met were calloused by their 'world's-work' into absolute insensibility of honor, virtue, or noble purpose. And the public deference which they pay to morals, religion, patriotism and virtue, and which fills the outward social character of their lives, is only a profitable respect, unwillingly given to a public opinion which privately they mock at and pity and despise. That is emphatically true of Mr. Opolee, and almost as true of all of them."

"Thetty, did any of the brutal lot dare to use disrespectful language—in—the presence of—a lady?—in your presence?"

"Don't excite yourself, John dear, on that score. Yes, I will tell you, one of them did; but thanks to the foresight that sent two of us, not one alone, when he offered the veiled insult, he was confronted with the dignity of self-respect; the honest, prompt resentment of a self-respecting woman, and became himself the humiliated victim of his indiscretion. Mr. Opolee had said to us there was no unfilled position in his office at present; but he chatted on in an over-familiar way, and later on insinuated that a chance might occur soon,

if the lady met the requirements. This he said with a look of quick scrutiny, and arching of the eyebrows, and an inflection on the word requirements, all directed to my sister, which sent the red blood to her face and to mine, and we arose abruptly to go. He, too, arose hastily and made apology, but in such clumsy embarrassment as to utterly belie his assertion that we ‘misunderstood him,’ and that he was ‘most desirous of granting us any possible aid.’ He was really startled, alarmed, at the possible consequences of his mistake, and deeply humiliated; for I had found him out. He had shown his meanness, and I my womanly courage. I had my revenge. It seems to me that they look upon women, at least dependent women, as brainless, unthinking creatures, only intended for their service or amusement. They fearlessly talked before sister and myself—while we waited our chance to make our errand known—with perfect abandon of their plans and schemes; talked that which they would never have dared discuss in the presence of men, of business men. We did not find a place for Maggie, but got some encouragement to try later at the office of the Electric Railroad Co., and Maggie will go down in August to see them again. She says she must try to be self-dependent, for, so far as she can see, none of the young men who are fit to be husbands have opportunities or incomes to safely assume the responsibility of a home and the care of even two persons.”

“ Thetty, I have lost the chance of my life through that mortgage matter. I am beginning to doubt if there is going to be any encouraging opportunity for me here, and to wonder if there is not some more desirable and profitable place for me elsewhere. I begin to feel that

I must tramp away from the place where I have lived and want to live, to find the place where I *can* live. I don't see why manufacturing business, manufacturing work, cannot be done by honorable men and honest methods. If one makes any good thing that the world needs, the people, I believe, will reward him for it; and one need not be a rascal because he is a successful man. I believe I shall go to New York or some other big city, and make an effort to change my vocation anyhow."

"I fear, John, it is too nearly true that, though a man need not be a rascal because he is successful, he is oftener nowadays financially successful because he is a rascal. You can't be successful that way if you try; and you'll never try."

The two chatted on for a while over ways and means, all too uncertain to give much hope, and when, a half hour later, John sighed and arose to go, he said, "I think I shall go down and try any way, for there is no chance to get ahead here, and any move is a move in the dark, Thetty. I must go home now, dear," and he took his hat which she handed him.

She slipped her arm into his, and they slowly walked out into the night of the world, starlighted down the path by love, nothing else, just love and the hope she bears. There are widespread maples on both sides of the country road past the Sconset farms, and on this moonless night they threw shades of impenetrable darkness over the way that lay before John Hardhand. When they parted at the gate, he caught at the hand she held out to him as if it were a cable to draw him out from the swirl of an angry sea. He lifted her plump little hand to his lips and reverently kissed it. But,

touched with pity for him and seeing his need of cheer, she prettily pursed her mouth and held it up to be kissed, as she gave his hand a tell-tale squeeze which said to the heart that knew how to read love's message aright : "In sorrow, as in joy, my heart goes with you ever, John ; be cheered, good man."

Down into the darkness he went, so filled with conflicting emotions as to be careless of where he stepped or how. He scrambled along the dark way, and more than once nearly fell. Once, when he had gone but a few rods down the roadway, he stopped for a moment to look back at that sacred place in the darkness where despair had been kindled to hope by the touch of love. Ah ! there she still stood. A broad stream of lamp-light from out the parlor window shot down along the path, covering and inclosing Thetty with a halo as she stood at the gate. She stood irradiated—John's anchor of hope, his guardian angel. Tall, willowy, graceful, transfigured against the background of the world's night, with her right hand raised to her forehead, she peered from under its shadow down into the darkness where John had gone. Star of his hope ! Her eyes ever sought him out ; her prayers, her hopes, her love ever followed him. He would think of her so, would carry that picture ever with him.

That John might not needlessly waken the folks from their sleep in the silence of night, he quietly, stealthily, entered his home through the kitchen-door at the rear. The tall, old-fashioned clock in the corner ticked loudly, in ominous tone, and it called him out of the riot of thought and the schemes of men back to a sense of the sadness of life. The intense quiet startled him. He seemed to himself like a guilty trespasser in a tomb,

He walked with cat-like tread, on his toes, as he entered the kitchen, and held his breath as he paused to note the voice of the clock that fairly spake as it knocked off the seconds of life in a swinging, rhythmic, measured tread. Quite in time and tune with his thoughts, it said, plainly enough, to John, Farmer John :

Tick-tack, tick-tack,
Time goes ahead, but never goes back ;
Though hope be deferred and anxiety rack
Thy soul, poor man, tick-tack ;
You must go ahead, and you cannot turn back.
Tick-tack, tick-tack.

Time paces on, and thy end comes quick,
Tack-tick, tack-tick ;
Though darkness of trouble be ever so thick,
Think quickly and act, for you must be quick,
Tack-tick, tack-tick ;
Though hearts be hopeful or hearts be sick,
Tack-tick, tack-tick, tack-tick, tack-tick.

There's a laughing babe in its mother's lap,
And I tick-tack, tick-tack ;
And the babe is a widowed mother, in black,
Tick-tack, tick-tack ;
And to-day she is dead that was yesterday sick,
Tack-tick, tack-tick.

The candle of life burns out so quick,
Tack-tick, tack-tick ;
Set it aloft in its candlestick,
Tack-tick, tack-tick ;
Trim it to lighten the world, right quick,
Tack-tick, tack-tick.

You must go straight on in your journey, John,
And you cannot turn back, whatever the track,
Tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack.

He crept softly up to bed, and life seemed to his shaken soul a monstrous problem. He lay for a long time with his face buried in his folded arms and with heaving chest, fighting back unmanly tears ; but he fell asleep. Benedicite !

The life-wearied man overslept. The sun shone into the room when he waked and went down to the opened door of a new life, to meet his fate, in the morning.

CHAPTER II.

OFF.

"HULLO, Jahn!" said old Jimmy McGurk, as he got up from the doorstep of Farmer Hardhand's house, where he sat smoking a short black pipe. "Gud mornin', mon." For John had just stepped out of the door, with unkempt, frouzy hair, and stood shielding his eyes from the glorious morning sun with his big brown hand.

"I were a-settin' here, Jahn, for nigh onto a half an hour a-waitin' to see ye."

"Well, Jimmy, what is it you want?" John inquired.

To which Jimmy replied in the best of brogues and the richest of rolling r's :

"Yous can do me a turren, Jahn, as will help me in matthers beyant me ken; ye have a bit larnin', can read and write and figger and sich, and I can nayther do wan nor the other; and the hops I raished lasht year on the Laidler farm lot, and sint to New Yarrock to be sold in commission, is burned en a fire, wid the warehouse where they was shtored. The 'shurance was ped fer wid de storage, but folks tells me as how I will have to prove the vally of me stuff and look sharp to the figgerin' of me loss to get me money. I don't know how is the way, an' I'm afeart of the lieyers an'

ain't afeard o' yous. You can fix it all fer me as well as they, uvery bit, an' I'll give ye the money now for the thravel an' boord, and pay ye well afther for yer trouble, and ye can sind me the money be mail, an' shtop a bit to see the city as well."

"And when do you wish me to go, Jimmy?"

"They tells me as read the lethers, that the claimants must meet the appraisers at noon of to-day; and to get there before it, ye'll have to take the 8:20 train, an' it's goin' on siven o'clock now."

"I'll go, Jimmy. Bring over to me all the papers as quick as you can."

John hastily washed, combed his hair and donned his Sunday-clothes. He sat down to the breakfast his mother had kept warm for him in the oven, and which was now hastily spread on the table. She went gliding about, getting collars, shirts, ties, underclothing, and all needful apparel, and packed his bag while he ate, for Jimmy had told her of his wishes before John was up, but not of the time to go. John bolted his breakfast, and hastily added some needfuls which his mother had left out of the handbag, a photograph or two and some letters, for he meant to stop longer than his mother supposed. Jimmy brought in the papers, which John carefully placed in the bag, and then, closing it with a snap, he turned down the swing ears at the ends, set it down on the chair, and hurried off up to Farmer Vick's, alternately walking and running in his haste. Thetty saw him coming, and with wondering eyes came hurrying down to the gate. She listened to the tale of his quickly-made plans. He kissed Thetty's hand, for good Mrs. Vick, with wonderment, too, stood looking down at them from the piazza, with sleeves rolled up,

a checked apron on, her hands on her hips, and a curious, welcoming smile brightening her face.

"Thetty," he said, "I'm going to try." And with a wave of the hand in hasty salute to Mrs. Vick, he went pacing away under the maples.

He only stopped at his home to get the bag and to kiss his mother, and as the train rolled up he stood on the platform and stepped aboard.

A clanging bell, some slow and some rapid, wheezy puffs, the roar of wheels on a distant track, and then, down by the curve where the engine gave three toots as the train had swept round out of sight, great rolls of black or drab smoke tumble over and through each other, the distant roar dies out, and John is gone.

A flock of blackbirds fly over the track at the curve and alight in the alders. A meadow-lark sails down into the dew-wet grass of the meadow; a lumber wagon goes banging and rattling down the hill toward Henchman's Dam. A grass-sparrow alights on a stake of the fence and, lifting its bill toward the heavens, flutters the feathers of its throat with the sweetest bird-song God ever tuned to salute a morning sky. A perfectly noiseless quiet, a country quiet, a moment to think, and the world moves peacefully on again. The pebble went in and down, the circles are widened and lost to our eyes, and the sea of life is smooth.

Well, well! John Hardhand gone to New York! So we plan and figure, and fail; and destiny comes rushing on to grapple and fling us into the vortex where we must strike out, right and left, or go down.

CHAPTER III.

SUMMER BOARDERS

SUMMER boarders came up every year to Sconset from the city. It busied good Mother Vick and the girls for a month or two, it helped to grind out the income-grist that went to the mortgagee, and it left a little toll for the family "furbelows." At noon of the day John left home there came, among many others, a letter from Brooklyn, N. Y., to

"MY DEAR, DEAR MRS. VICK.

"Baby, and Johnny and Ruth and myself will be up on Saturday next to spend some weeks in the hills and tone up a bit. You must give us the same two rooms we had last year, and milk and fruit and meat of the best, for I am 'all run down.' Tennis rackets, hammocks and croquet sets we will bring with us, and if you can only hire Miss Rogers' piano for the summer, so we can have a one set german in the parlor of nights, it will be very jolly; and tell John, Thetty's John, (I'd fall in love with John, if I was not tied to a stick, and Thetty had not chained John to her), tell him to fix up the old boat for the river, and the lines and artificial 'flies to cheat the fish' till we land 'em. And tell good Father Vick to fix up the harness and get out the old side seat market wagon, for we must have moonlight rides and frolics and a roistering time. Mrs. Tempest and her family are coming to Butners, the Finefly girls to the Rush House, and when the fellows come up for the Saturday run, to go back on Monday, as they will each week, you are so near New York, we will make it so lively there that we can't find time to quarrel and fret as we women did last year. I, too, wanted to go down to the Rush House on the river opposite Scarborough, but Hubby says, no! He is an awfully sober and sensible person, you know, and he says, 'Mother Vick's, and the milk, and quiet and sleep, is what you need. The Rush House is only a bit of a city show set down in

a country road to poison Nature's very best gifts.' But I think the dress and frolics are awfully nice, and besides there is a chance to humble the pride of that swell Mrs. Ponsby. She just thinks her Worth-made gowns and her French accent (more Irish than French) so captivating. And with young Delaplane fawning about her (she might pass for his mother) she thought she just broke our hearts with jealousy. He is a very nice young man, with a pretty dark mustache, and we all liked him very much, but she; what with her decollete dress, and her evening walks with that man; it was dreadful and shameful, we all allowed, and just wished some one could humble her pride or just let Mr. Ponsby know of her carryings on. Thetty won't mind if you let Ruth, our nurse, sleep with her, will she? Ruth is a tidy girl, she came off a farm, you know, and is yankee enough for the best. With ever and ever so much love, I am *ever*,

"Your true, tried friend,

"MRS. THOMAS DORRANCE.

"P.S.—Mr. Dorrance will likely think he must come up once in a while of a Sunday, though what he wants of the country I can't see. He never goes down to the Island or anywhere else as other men do, but mopes about at home and writes love-letters and sermons to his wife; his own wife; as if that was not all understood, without wasting the paper and ink to tell it all over and over, and time that might be spent in fun, and having a real good time. I think men are such queer creatures, anyhow, don't you?

"MINNIE DORRANCE."

Good Mother Vick's mail these days was something marvelous, and very interesting. It was instructive, as well, to the student of social phenomena. She was "My dear, dear," to every one of the "true and tried friends," who were hunting for the place they could speak of, as, "where we go for the summer," and she was plain "Mrs. Joel Vick" to the husbands who wrote to ask:

"What rooms have you for my wife and two daughters, Laura and Grace? And what are you going to charge for their board? Our house here on 9th Ave., Brooklyn, fronts and overlooks Pros-

pect Park. It is on the very ridge of Long Island. We get a delightful, fresh breeze from either the land or the sea, of the purest air this world can give ; and it is a marvel to me, what drives Mrs. Windam to go up and pack into your little stuffy bedrooms and live in a trunk, even with the good, clean hospitality and kindly service you have to offer, but she is dying for change she says (she is always shouting for change, and manages to get most of mine). And the girls could never go back to school and have to say, "We didn't go to the country this year." Nor can Mrs. W. stand the questioning criticisms of Mrs. Grundy, who is sure to say, bye and bye : "Where did you summer ?" I think Mrs. W. will not take part in the women's quarrels that made you and your home so unhappy last year. At least she has promised she won't. Try to make room for me at the table occasionally on Sunday when I run up, and if you don't happen to have a Hoffman House bridal chamber at my command in your good homelike hovel, just send me out to sleep on the hay in the barn. I won't kick if the horses don't. I am, Madam, most respectfully yours,

"G. P. WINDAM."

A letter came from a young lady, who worked in a cloak factory, one who by dint of a whole year's economies, had hoarded up the marvelous sum of twenty-five dollars for this special purpose ; who was worn with work, down to a colorless phantom of what God had designed her to be. Out of the pent little hot, stifling rooms of a twelve dollar flat, she wrote :

" GOOD MRS. VICK.

" The taste of freedom and flowers and fields, and, above all else, the frank, natural kindness of yourself and your daughters, to me, together with the plain goodies, fresh from the farm fields, did me so much good last summer, that the memory of it all has cheered me through the long year. I have stored up nickels and dimes and dollars as I could, at my piece-work, working a little earlier and a little later, and all the holidays of the year, but one, and now I have permission for "two weeks off" (I think the foreman saw it was rest or wreck with me). Can I come to you Monday? (I must pack on Sunday) and sleep with Thetty, the odd sister? (How lucky for

me you have five daughters instead of four or six). They were all real good and kind to me, but, somehow, Thetty and I were such friends, you know. I heard you were going to raise your prices this year, that it did not profit you for your trouble. I did not hear it until 'twas too late to make more of my funds, and if you can't take me at six dollars, the same as last year, I cannot come, for my money will not permit, and I will have to gulp down the sobs of a disappointment more bitter than I can write. They say love will starve a cat, but I know love will feed a hungry soul, and you must write me at once or it will be too late; and I can't get my vacation changed to any other date, for the foreman just told me so.

"Very truly yours,

"ETTA MAY FOYLE."

How little indeed the favored ones of this world know how like an oasis in the desert of a hard-pressed life comes the sweetness of Nature's treasures to the thirsty soul of a mortal like Etta Foyle. Alas, that the surfeit of wealth and the pinch of poverty's pain, should wreak such wreck of the joy of living that God has prepared for his children.

Mrs. Vick delegated to Thetty the work of replying to the letters that came in great numbers. And Thetty, good soul, wrote first to Etta Foyle, for she could not help it, though Etta's letter came last. She wrote, "Come, bless you, we have always a welcome for you." And to Mrs. Dorrance replied :

"We cannot promise the two best rooms for so long, and my 'bed-fellowess' has already secured Ruth's favored place, but, come on, we will prepare for you and do the best we can. The wagon is out and the boat is repaired, but John is not here, and you may have to fix your own bait for the fish."

And to Mr. Windam she wrote :

"Yes, Mrs. W. and Laura and Grace may come next week and the price is eight dollars each. It will stop the financial leak that

the mortgage makes in our funds and it helps you to stop up Mrs. Grundy's mouth, too, I suppose, so we will all give thanks. Let them come. We will say, nothing, for the Sundays for yourself. You must pay us with the funny old saws, and the good-humor and cheer with which you salted our dinners last year,

“Respectfully,

“THEORETTA VICK.”

And to Widow Craft, and Gertie and Jennie she wrote, “Come.” And to Tendril and his wife she wrote, “Come.” And they came. To the others she wrote, “Not this week, but possibly next. The room is all engaged now ; we will write you a line later on.” And so the annual trouble began.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD BAT AND HIS CASTLE. "THE POWER TO TAKE THE MUTTON."

As one drives down the Sconset road under the shade of the maples toward Scarborough bridge, the Shore Line from New York to Boston strings its wires and tracks for many miles right parallel with it, in sight all along and but little way off. About half a mile from Farmer Vick's, a narrower road turns squarely off from the Sconset road and across the railroad. It leads to somewhere over the hill, we do not care where, for we are not going all the way. Just a short way up this lane, in a shanty-like house, made for the most part of a wing from old Sconset tavern that was burned a long time since and of which but this bit remained as a souvenir of departed grandeur, lived Mr. Bartholomew McAuliffe. From the old boards and posts of a wind-wrecked cornhouse he had built a shed-like ell to his house, much like the structure called in the West, a "lean-to." The lean-to was roofed with cast-off tin roofing which he had found at the refuse dumping grounds down by Scarborough. Altogether, the home of Mr. Bartholomew McAuliffe was made up of old tin and shingles, odd windows and doors, relics of the antique and patches of the present. From the clumsy leather-hinged gate at the front, to the old tumbledown barn and piggery at the rear of the house, the whole outfit was as grotesque, novel and rugged as the character and figure of old Bartholomew himself.

The shanty had its humor, too. The lean-to was

a standing comedy ; held up to the house in all its patchwork of straggling shingles and bits of board, by the funny old blanket of tin, which, nailed at its upper part to the old tavern wing, lapped over the eaves at the lower edge of the lean-to and held it from falling to final wreck. Adding yet more to the comical incongruity, was a bit of tin used to piece out a scant corner of the roof. It was the wreck of an old tin beer sign, which, black, on vermillion ground, had once read : "Come in here ! The glass of beer that you get in this house is the coolest and best in the town for the money."

The painted picture of a big overflowing beer-glass was nearly all cracked off, as, also, all but some fragments of the lettering on the upper half of the old sign, but the lower part was quite complete, and read plainly enough, " This house is the coolest and best in the town for the money."

The proclamation thus prominently made, was no more trite and funny, than true ; for barring the money old Bat had spent in moving the tavern wing onto the spot, little more had gone into the building but odds and ends, which without money cost, he had picked up here and there and with his own labor pieced into the house.

Mr. McAuliffe was a " squatter." That is, he was living, without permission, on earth from which the owner had not " shooed " him off. He tilled the soil alongside the track for half a mile or more either way, and raised potatoes and corn and beans, and tethered a cow. He also had in the piggery some fine fat pigs.

Old Bat and his family lived fully as comfortably and with much less fret and worry than most American

farmers ; "so they did," and he knew it and said it. It was a significant fact, was it not? Bartholomew McAuliffe was a funny man. His fortunes and faith and hope were all sustained by the good-humor that percolated its sweetening treasure through every thought and word and act of the poor, ignorant old man's life. As the odd roof of tin and scraps held up the lean-to and anchored it to the house, so in each, or both, the man and the house, good-humor was ever on top.

The pork was snapping and sizzling down to a crisp in the spider. The kettle was singing on the stove, and Mr. Bartholomew McAuliffe sat on a quaint board bench just outside the door, smoking and awaiting his breakfast. Like old Jimmy McGurk, "old Bat" made a very strong friend of a very short pipe. He sat puffing away in short little snaps, when Jimmy's boy, Terrence, came down the road and hailed the old man with.

"Good-mornin', Mr. McAuliffe."

"Good-day to you, Teddy," says Bat, "and did yer auld mon get settled wid de shurance min an de hops, Terrence?"

"He did," says Teddy, "and kem out bether nor he taut he wud. He got a good hoondeder an fortee, and he says it's as good as he did last year, and that, too, afther sendin' back twinty dollars to Jack Hardhand, who sint up to th' auld mon ivery cint that he got from the shurance min, but the price of the thravel an boord, never keepin' a dime for his labor and trouble in doin' me father sich a good job. Me father says Jahn is as good a Yankee as if he were born in Ireland."

"Sure, Teddy," says Bat, "you're the cub of a lucky mon ; an' be that token ye'll be wan day a boss o' de

gang, and drive in a waggin wid yer Irish nose turned up a-snuffin' at the commoner sort. Say, Teddy, do ye's know, 'twas a bad bit o' fortin that med auld Mishter Hardhand sell the marshland to the Mill Company, stid o' lettin' Jahn have it?"

"An' who was tellin' ye, Mishter McAuliffe, that Jahn had wint for to buy it?"

"Sure, Teddy, an' Jahn tault me himself, this day week, and all about ditchin' an farmin' it up, much the same as we do bogland in the Auld Country; an he said as how he would give me stiddy worruk wid me shpade in the ditches till frasht kem hard in the fall, an' thin agin in the tobacco fields all through next year, so I liked."

"An' what a day did he say he'd give ye?" asked Terrence.

"O, bother yer fears, Teddy, never a worrud sid he nor sid I, about price. John Hardhand would do me the right, niver fear; I'd thrust him wid all I have, an' de kays o' me castle; an honester, bether man never faddled a flipper this side of the Irish Say. O, yerre, Teddy, here cooms yer auld mon."

Teddy startled and nestled about; looked first toward his father and then toward the crossing, not knowing whether it was safer and better to humble his own importance and scud off in haste, or wait until his father came up and see if he would humble it for him; for Bat's left-handed compliments and kindly familiarity began to make Teddy feel that he counted one in the world, himself. So he stayed.

"An' phat are ye doin' here?" said Jimmy McGurk to the boy. "Ye gossipin', blatherin' blagaard, can ye's niver do as yer tault? Go hitch up the harse an' draw up

the wood from the cove for yer mother ; jist wait till yer mother gets howlt o' ye, lad ! Be off wid yer now !”

With never a word of reply, but with humbled and angerful face, Teddy McGurk shambled off down the road.

“Good-mornin’ to ye, Mishter McAuliffe,” said Jimmy, “an’ how’s Mrs. McAuliffe, an’ how’s the young leddy ?”

The young lady to whom Jimmy referred, was none other than the only daughter, perhaps only child, of the house of McAuliffe, for the son had not been heard from since he ran off to sea four years ago. Katie McAuliffe was witty and wise and pretty. One of those rare sweet flowers that push their heads up out of the weeds, looking a trifle paler perhaps, a bit more delicate from the shade, but all the more beautiful, because of the contrasting environment. Just at that moment she came to the door, and she answered Jimmy’s grandiloquent salute with a friendly nod and kindly smile of recognition. Where could she have gotten that perfect complexion and figure, and that pretty face ? Her mother had, in exaggeration, all the features peculiar to her race ; projecting chin, straight cut mouth, long upper lip, high cheek-bones, but peculiarly bright and pleasing eyes. And old Bat’s face was puckered and tanned out of all semblance to beauty, if ever it had any. Thin and bony it was, but strewn all over with lines of drollery and saddened good-humor. A wise and a thoughtful look, too, was there ; a face to study. It was funny to hear those people who were cultured, but only half as wise, speak in a patronizing way of “poor, ignorant, funny old Batty McAuliffe.” As peculiar as it was true, was the

fact that old "Bat," as he was familiarly called, was an oracle of wisdom among his class. And though he could with difficulty spell out the news in the paper, and made no pretense to write at all, nor was he sagacious nor cunning in hoarding up wealth for himself, yet he was a confidant and adviser of old men and youth, because he was hearty and kindly and natural. Boys and young men of American birth made friends with old Bat ; for but little race hatred was known in this sparsely-peopled country-place, and the miserable clannishness that divides great cities into sections known as "Dutchtown," "Young Ireland," "Jerusalem Row," and "Crow Hill," is unknown in Sconset.

Something in John Hardhand's manner when he went away, and more in the letter that came with the money to Mr. McGurk, made Jimmy think that John had gone to stay. Made him curious to know what John was planning to do, and what had cheated him out of the marshland scheme, and the marriage which all Sconset was ready to bless.

"Say, Misther McAuliffe," said Jimmy, "'tis beyent me ken, what med auld Mr. Hardhand sell the marsh to the boss of the mills, stid o' John."

"Me good mon," says Bat, "yer so foxy to smell out a dollar, an' wise to put it to keep, sure I'm knockin' me noddle to think, Jimmy, how be it, that you can't see the way of it all. It beant twenty years yet, since we came same ship out together, from County Arlone, an' have ye forgot the way of it all at home, Jimmy ? Have ye forgot ? Were yer eyes so blinded wi' love for Maggie, that ye knew ye must go, but didn't look why ? An' whin Maggie kem out, an' ye married her here, did ye niver think why ye weren't turnin' the

turf o' the green hills o' County Arlone, stid o' wastin' yer days a learnin' the ways of a land, be it iver so good, can niver be dearer than home. I'm afeart, dear mon, ye've been busyin' here a makin' yer nisht, while the Laerds have been busyin', too, a buildin' ladders to reach the eggs and take them as fast as they're laid. An' have ye forgot scant petatees and pork that yer father had for the home, an' the mutton all wint to Liverpool markets to pay the rint? It isn't the nod o' the Queen nor the power of a name makes a *Laerd*; it's *the power to take the mutton*, mon. Shure the worsht of us all likes home and is loth to lave it; but, Jimmy, ye lift yer home becase ye were med, be the min and the laws as had ye at mercy; an' 'tis fer that same that Jahn is pushed out o' the nisht; an' the way of it all is plain, but the cure is not so aisy, an' wid all me thinkin' on't 'tis yet beyent me ken. If I had the laernin' of some as be, I could find a way out of the muddle, I'm thinkin', for our Lord has med us; no wrong has a right to be; an' a way be, to right it all."

CHAPTER V.

DRIFTING. LOST HIS WAY. WANTED, A CHANCE. "HELP
WANTED, MALES."

JOHN had been only twice to New York before in all his life, though he had lived little more than three hours' travel by rail away from the great city. Once, when a lad, he came down with his father to the markets, in a schooner from Scarborough, with a load of onions. It was a wonderful sail down the river and Sound, and only a day around the Washington Market places, and back they went. He had just a glimpse of the bustle and dirt along West Street and the docks. And again, he went down with an excursion of temperance delegates to a convention in old Madison Square. He then remained one night and two days. Nearly all the delegates there came from country towns, and he stopped over night with a resident temperance man, who talked little else than about the convention and growth of "the cause"; and really, John had just been one in a basket of countrymen brought to town, and set down for a night and a day—to chatter together—and then had gone back in the same dish that brought them. But John had glimpses of wonderful things, and wonderful ways, with his wondering eyes, and went back to wonder in thought, while he picked up stones from the stony fields or followed the wobbling harrow as it tore up and leveled the smooth laid lands of the plow, on the Sconset farm.

It was different now. He was alone in the train, though the train was full, and he dreamed along in a dazed way. The errand for Jimmy was easy enough, and

he settled all that in his mind as he rode. But beyond that was an open sea for John, with some unseen, unknown shore. Whether his haven lay this way or that, was a mystery yet to him. If he rowed with a will, he might only be rowing to wreck ; who could tell ? With no shore or star in sight, how could he know what to do ? "Whatever your track, you cannot turn back," go on. So he dropped the oars, ran up the sail, and just drifted with wind and tide. He slid down in the cushioned seat, shoved his knees into the plush-backed seat in front, and laid his head back where it rolled and bobbed and pounded about on the metal-bound back of his seat, until a screw-head caught and jerked out a hair, then he uttered a "gosh," sat bolt upright, or swayed about and got grit in his teeth and smut on his face, and saw farms and woods and hills fly by in colors and shapes so familiar to him, that it palled on his sight. The car trucks went with a "clack-whack, clack-whack, clack-whack," from rail to rail, and the rattle and roar of it all, together with the monotonous and unintelligible conversation of people across the aisle and about the car, pushed John gently off into the languid stupor of railroad sleep. His head fell slowly back onto the sharp edge of the window-frame. His chin fell down and the dust blew into his open mouth. Only as they were "'most to New York," did he awaken from sleep. The engine gave a loud "toot—toot, toot." John snorted and sprang to his feet. He reached for his hat on the floor and felt for the bag he could not see, for now it was dark, and now it was light, in the Harlem tunnels. He toppled forward and toppled backward. He grabbed at the back of the seat in front, or he would have fallen out into the aisle. Then he sat

down to recall the toot that had awakened him, to rub his leg that was fast asleep, to feel for the crease in the back of his head, and to stupidly realize that the whistle had aroused him to a sense of shame, discomfort and pain, beyond even the discomfort of so awkward a pose for sleep. The dismal series of Harlem tunnels began to grow tedious, too. It seemed as if they were to be forever engaged with the detail of arriving. But the end did come at last. He got out under the great arched roof of the Grand Central Station, moved slowly along with the crowd to the Forty-second Street entrance, made his way through the line of howling "cabbies" along the curb, and boarding a Fourth Avenue car, rode directly down to "Earle's Hotel," at Canal and Center Streets. It was there he should meet the insurance men, and there he would live, for the present, at least.

John Hardhand—countryman John—was "green" in the cunning and schemes of "business men," but was thoroughly, ripely schooled in the theory and work of legitimate business dealing. His four years in Scarborough school had been given to study, and not to play. Since that time the financial part of his father's work had all fallen to him. The adjustment of old Jimmy's claim was fairly and honestly effected, and the end was all that could have been wished. It was settled by two o'clock that day. The check was passed. He immediately mailed the funds to Jimmy, and then sat down to write out an advertisement for insertion in *The World*, and it ran thus :

"WANTED.—By a man who is willing to work, a chance in a factory or at similar employment where one can work his way up, if he is earnest and tries. Call on or address,

"JOHN HARDHAND, Room 21, Earle's Hotel."

He inquired the way and then with the advertisement copy in his pocket walked down Centre Street to the "World" office. Centre Street is not interesting to a man with so much on his mind, but at the lower end of the street "The World" building, surmounted with a great gilt dome, towers up in the sky, and John, as he walked down the street, had kept his eyes on that. When he had passed in his advertisement and paid for it, he walked from the "World" office across Park Row, sat down on a bench in City Hall Park, and looked up at the great buildings of "The Tribune," "The Times" and "The World," overwhelmed with admiration of their magnificent grandeur. City Hall, which he saw in his "temperance raid" as a marvel too great to be really the work of men, looked squatly, now.

Words had a literal meaning to a man like John, to an honest man ; and this tandem of names aroused a tandem of thoughts in his mind. "Tribune and Times and World," he said half aloud to himself. "If the Tribune would speak the whole truth of the times, to the world, would not the world be bettered? What is the truth of the cause that embitters the world of men, that breeds hatred and discontent, breeds poverty, heartache and want, and is filling the world with tramps?

A ragged elbow nudged his own, and a hoarse voice said drawlingly in his ear :

"Say, pard, can ye give a poor man a nickel to git over the ferry? I want to git over the ferry. I lost my way in the mornin', an' then I lost my money, an' I hain't had nothin' to eat since yesterday noon, pard; honest, I hain't."

Had John lost his way in the morning of life? Was he, too, a partner, a "pard," in the company of tramps? Would his little money go, too? Would *he* some day be asking for bread, and be gladder for beer? He looked at the greasy, frouzy wreck and a score like him, who were lolling about, and with pity and fear his fingers trembled as he dropped a dime in the outstretched palm and studied the blear-eyed, bloated wreck of lost manhood.

"Thank ye, Mister," said the fellow, and he winked stupidly to another member of the firm of Tramp & Co., to sneak up and try the dodge, but John got up and sadly walked back to his hotel home. After the tale of the clock, the feverish sleep of the night, the day of ride and confusion and change, he was tired and needed rest. He wrote to Thetty, and to his brother Paul, then went to bed and to sleep.

Next morning, after breakfast, he walked over to Broadway, and when he returned his mail began to come in. He had altogether thirty-two answers, but though he waited about the hotel all day, no one called at room 21 to see the man who wanted "a chance to work his way up." Nine of the letters were from different employment agencies, each detailing their worldwide renown and pointing with pride to the marvelous record of fortunes they had opened up to thousands of men in the past. They would, "for a nominal fee, enter his name on their books, which are consulted by all the great business men of affairs," who are seeking good pantry-boys, pilots, painters, or railroad presidents. John invested two dollars in one of these chances, though he found these agents a seedy and scheming lot, and he called at their office occasionally

for a month or two, yet nothing came of it but wear of shoes and waste of time and clearer perception of those disgusting methods of misleading the unwary, that are on their face so apparently fraudulent as to insult the intelligence, and which in the slang of the period are designated as "fakes."

One reply read, "We can give you a place at the lathe, if you are good at the work, a first-class man, and the wages we offer suit. Bring reference from your last shop. Call before 10 A. M. to-morrow at No. — Centre Street."

He tossed that letter under the table, and another, and then another, and others exacting requirements he could not meet, and yet others he could not without telling a lie, for he "must have had some experience at the business" they said. John could not lie, and some liar, no doubt, got the position and smuggled his ignorance through in the crowd of other workmen. Thus, finally, all the letters but eight went under the table. He wrote out the address of each of the eight on a card, and next day paced the City of New York from Battery Point to Harlem, from river to river, up and down, back and forth, to meet these wide-scattered hirers of men; walked until the skin was worn off his toes and his stockings were stained with blood. He studied his own looks, actions and words, as to how he should act and talk; and, through this strained unnaturalness, came nearer being a dishonest man than he had ever been before.

These letters were mostly misleading and blind, not naming the business at all, or John would have spared himself half his wasted tramping. His patience was sorely tried, when, after walking from Jackson's Hook to

Eleventh Avenue and Twenty-seventh Street, he found that they only wanted a "sprue boy" to knock off sprues from the iron castings, and to handle the cores for the moulders in an iron foundry, for which they would give him four dollars a week the first year, if he suited. At another place in Green Street, near Spring—it was clearly a fraud—they wanted a capable man, and they would pay him six dollars a week. They were manufacturers of Dodo's patent paper dusters; dusters made of stripped, colored tissue-paper and dowel sticks. They were really trying to make a show of business, to sell out, over and over again; and he learned the next day that it was continuously advertised under the head of "business opportunities," in one of the great daily papers, as "an established and growing manufacturing business, with plant complete and established trade for their staple productions. For sale, the half interest of a retiring partner; the other half, not for sale, as the junior partner remains to join with the buyer in pushing the business to still greater success. Five hundred dollars down, balance on easy time." Each of the two partners to this fraud took his turn in retiring, as each new victim came in, and returning, as each fleeced lamb went out.

The eighth and last call that John made was at the office of the Compressed Oxygen Gas Company in First Avenue, near — Street. At this factory hydrogen, nitrogen, or oxygen gas was manufactured and compressed, under the Blitz process. It occurred to John that he might reasonably hope to work his way rapidly up, with oxygen gas, but he did not see how he could rise into distinction and wealth by wheeling in coal at a dollar and seventy-five cents per day, or even by

shoveling it under the retorts ; and he hobbled down to his hotel room to bathe his blistered feet, and rest his weary limbs and wait, for another day, as it was now five o'clock of his third day out of a home.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRAMP IN QUEST OF AN OPPORTUNITY. REJOICE ! A CHANCE AT LAST. FAILURE. FOURTEENTH STREET. MAGDALEN.

NEXT morning he sallied forth early with the "Herald" and "World" in his hand, and a dozen marked advertisements, under the headings of "Help wanted, males" and "Business opportunities," and again began his tramp, seeking a chance in the world of men. One of the notices of business opportunities gave the same street and number as that of the Duster Manufacturers who advertised yesterday. John was startled with a suspicious thought, then remembered that there were several sorts of business in the one building, and he went again, only to find that it was the same, the very same business; but the "other partner" was there, who had not seen John, and this partner swelled about with lofty indifference to little things, and with the pompous air of a "successful business man" explained at great length to John the fortune that was awaiting him in the duster business. The cost was so little, the profit so large, the demand so entirely beyond their capacity to supply. For a puffy and corpulent man, he managed his great corporation well. He made careful inquiry about John's finances and former business. "Only a solid and honorable man would do." The first five hundred dollars was "of course but a

nominal sum," it might answer, however, "to start." And he added that it really was not money that they needed at all, but "an intelligent, *experienced* business man," like John. The money to be paid in was simply to show his faith and to guarantee the active personal interest of the new partner in the business, etc., etc., etc. He found John "peculiarly adapted," he said, "to take the managing place of the retiring partner." The cheat was so plain and so silly, even in the eyes of poor honest John, that he felt his intelligence was insulted by it, and his trust in men shaken. It really made him feel sick.

However, John secured a position that day with a book concern. Their advertisement was strange enough, also, to the uninitiated, for there was not in it a word about *books*, but it read, "Wanted, in a commercial business, an intelligent, honest man, of good address and presence; no other requirements needed. Salary twelve dollars a week to begin. Good men in our employ are making from thirty to forty dollars a week." It was a canvasser for a subscription book they really wanted; but their advertisement in varying forms, over different names, was to be seen in the newspapers every day. John paid for his sample-book, and signed a contract of agreement, after hastily running it over, while his employer leaned over his shoulder, and others, about, seemed waiting for John to hurry this act. John signed, and went to work. Their instructions discouraged him again, for they showed him how he must lie and deceive if he wished to succeed; and the thought of such success made him sick at heart. But he inwardly said, "I shall try, without telling or acting the lies they advise."

He worked so hard, and his good honest face inspired such trust among those to whom he appealed, that to the great surprise of his employer at the end of a week he had sent in and booked nine new subscriptions. He stood in the office that night until long after six o'clock, the other canvassers and collectors all having gone home ; but the manager said not a word about pay. And at last John spoke to him ; but without uttering a word in reply, his employer smiled contemptibly as he handed John the contract he had signed, and pointed to some lines in very fine type printed across the end of the paper, which John now, for the first time, read slowly through. "No salary to be paid for the first week's canvassing unless at least twelve approved orders are passed in and accepted. Orders in weeks that follow, one dollar each if accepted ; payable only after first four numbers are delivered and paid for." John now recalled the way in which they had deceived him, the cruel ruse they had played on him. But they had booked his orders, and now held the contracts which he had made for them, with his customers. Holding the signed agreement in his trembling hand, he stepped up boldly, and confronting the manager, said in a hoarse voice, "Will you at least pay me the one dollar each I have faithfully earned on those nine orders ? "

The manager uttered no word of reply, but laughed aloud. (It was so amusing and novel to him,—the innocent earnestness of this honest man.)

A fire of anger came into John's face. He silently and contemptuously looked the manager in the face for a full half minute, until the man began to quail under the gaze, then, stepping nearer, he astonished

the man with a child-like but powerful flat-handed slap in the face that sent him backward against the wall. A dangerous look was in John's eyes. The manager dared not move nor utter a word ; but, white as death, he kept his staring eyes on the countryman, while John tore the agreement into shreds, threw the sample-book out of the window to the street below, and with another look at "bookie," that made the latter quake—for he thought he, too, would be thrown out next,—John turned and walked downstairs, and "the manager" drew a long, long breath.

John Hardhand tramped more than a month in the wearisome search for work—but in vain. I am not saying it is always so, for newspaper advertisements have pointed many a man to a good position, and to many a business house brought worthy help. But John's fortunes in that field were certainly bad ; and it is in the nature of "things as they are" that it should be oftener thus.

Answering a notice one day, John called at an early hour, at seven o'clock ; but even then a score of seekers were there ; he joined them and waited an hour. When the crowd had doubled, the man they were waiting to see came carelessly loitering in. He paused a moment and ran his eye over the crowd of men ; it fell on the honest, pleading face of poor John. A few moments later he beckoned him to a seat inside the office rail. As John sat there waiting, three men in blouses and overalls came in through the shop door at the rear of the office and stood near his chair, awaiting their employer's orders. John heard one of these men say in an undertone, "If that feller's come

to crowd Billy out, by workin' fer less wages, we'll make it hotter nor hell for him here."

"That we will," said the other, "an' Billy's wife sick in de bed an' just after buryin' de child."

"Draw your chair up here," said the gentleman to John. "Do you write a good hand? Can you figure and keep accounts?"

"Yes, sir, I can," said John.

"If ten dollars a week will satisfy you to begin, come Monday and try for a week; distribute the work, keep tally of work and of time, and make your report to me."

John's chance—rejoice! It has come at last. But he thought of Billy's sick wife, and the unpaid funeral bill for the child that was dead, and sat silent for a minute or more, with a choking sob in his throat, while this new master looked on, in wide-eyed wonder,—wonder that John's face did not light up with joy as other men's had done when he had said to them, "You may come." But at last John's voice came to him and he said in a whisper, "No, I feel sure I can't suit here," and rising, walked sadly out. What had just been said to John had been plainly heard by the crowd, but they had not heard John's reply to the "boss." Many of them had started to go as he passed through their midst, but he saw in the faces of those two waiting workmen the hate they felt for the man they believed had crowded out their fellow-workman. To his knowledge, John had never before been hated by mortal man; and again his heart was sick. He heard the manager say to the scattering men, "'Just hold on a bit;" and they stopped as John turned away. Would somebody get Billy's place? Quite likely, for two dollars less.

After a thousand efforts and failures John Hardhand began to doubt success. After failure and failure and failure he did not expect to succeed. His search became a hopeless, self-imposed duty, and so he continued it.

Reader, do not hastily condemn poor John. Do not say with contempt, "Cowardly,—weak." Think carefully first, estimate the enervating wear of failure, failure, failure; not "dropping water that will wear a stone," but pound, pound, pound. The sledge-hammer strokes that will break a rock. Are *you* the exceptional rock that cannot be broken?

John was performing an apparently hopeless duty and had not much interest in it. He spurred himself up in the morning with thoughts of the little done yesterday and the much that must be done to-day, and promised himself to use every minute in struggling, active search. He rushed out at seven—too early; the offices were closed, or if open the man he must see was not yet in. He waited; eight: "No more help needed at present." A walk of five or six blocks: "We hired a shipping clerk yesterday; a pity you didn't come in." Now, why did not John get that chance? Some other man did. It was only because John could not be in a hundred thousand places at once, that is all, which was his only way of surely being in the right place at the right time. It was because only one of the ten thousand seekers got, or could get that one "chance"; and the man who did get it was some other John.

After this experience he walked twenty-five blocks before he tried again, the ten-thousandth part of a chance was lost, and he dreaded to hear that hammer's blow, "No, not to-day," which he felt 'was

driving him farther into the gloomy stupor of despair. He was getting afraid of himself ; but he offered himself once more, and again was refused ; then he listlessly walked down the sunny, warm, noisy street and hardly swung his hands ; he drooped his shoulders and let them hang forward ; tired in body and mind and soul. Such hopeless effort, such an aimless end, was almost nauseating. He found himself easily diverted, quite willing to be diverted ; for whatever took his mind from himself gave him rest from the anxious strain of his life. Anything was a welcome guest of his mind that could bring him oblivion of the threatening future the dependent, and to him terrible fate that awaited him, if his money should all go before he secured employment. How frequently drunkards are made that way !

There was for him exquisite relief in sleep. Life in his waking hours was pain. He lay later in bed. He awoke with a frightened start, and a sigh of pain, from the peace of pleasant dreams, to the pain of an anxious troubled life. He was really not a sane man, though no one could call him crazed. He said half-aloud, to himself, "Blessed sleep, twin sister of death," and he thought, what is life, after all, that we should so madly fight for it? And what is death, but freedom from struggle ; release ? The soul escaped. The frightened, fluttering, wire-wounded bird freed ; no longer to pound itself sick and sore against the bars of a cruel cage.

Crude pictorial art is so common in this age that we are surfeited with it. The fences, walls and billboards are decorated with artistic work, marvels of beautiful lines and harmonic color. He often stood for

hours before the bright lithographed pictures of the theater posters, gazing stupidly, in a listless, absent-minded way, at the great half-acres of color and curve. He thought some of them really good; and John had an artistic sense. They employed the dragging time and relieved his harrowing thoughts. He would stop if a horse fell down or an axle broke, or to watch the lowering of a safe from an upper window, and gaze for an hour at such trivial things.

When the fast-chilling, way-lost wanderer in the blizzard storms of the West thinks of the fatal danger near and feels himself growing numb, he is startled with fear and whips himself into renewed effort of activity. Once, when John had for several minutes been watching a boy as he tied up a splintered and broken wagon-shaft with a string, he came to his senses and saw what he had not noticed before, that half a hundred others, like himself, were idly looking on. He was startled, and moved rapidly away, for he recalled how, three months before, when he had seen the very same incident, as he was bustling about full of hope, he had almost angrily said, "Those lazy loafers ought to be made to work, or be sent to jail, or be denied food until they earn it. 'Loaferism and rum are ruining the country.'" He was affrighted as he thought of himself, and wondered now how many of those idlers belonged, like himself to-day, to the disheartened seekers for work. Wondered if some hopeful and hustling man had thought as he rushed past *this* crowd of idlers to-day, "Why don't they send John off to jail," or out of the world, and out of the way?

At night he would think over the route he had taken and the efforts made during the day; it helped him to

maintain a sense of his duty and spurred him on. The history of one day, as he recalled it to mind, ran thus:—Went down to the Bolt-works to see Mr. Hallen; says he can't do anything for me now, there's no business at all (the usual phrase for small or unprofitable trade), thinks there "will not be much until fall; not much chance" for me until then, and hardly worth while for me to call; he will try to "remember John." From Hallen's he walked up to Fifty-ninth Street and to the menagerie in Central Park, where he began to forget himself in watching the capers of the well-fed animals. Then again the thought of his duty and his own needs came back to him. He remembered the fact, and said of himself, "This animal must be fed," and he rushed hurriedly off after this "five-minute look" and walked bravely over toward Bolen's in Third Avenue; but slower as he came nearer, and finally walked by—not in, he dreaded it so—and remembered how Bolen was vexed and how crossly he had spoken when he called there only Saturday last, and had said, "Needn't run in so often; will let you know if anything new turns up;" and then John, with almost a sense of rejoicing, recollected that Bolen was usually out of town on Tuesdays. That settled his conscience and eased his self-accusation, and he hurried off down Third Avenue, much as if he had some certain destination,—though he had not. He thought of two or three places to go, but did not determine which or fix on any one, and by this time he had reached Fourteenth Street and the crowd that so fascinates every thoughtful person.

Fourteenth Street! That panorama of moving humanity. That kaleidoscope of all the colors and shades of dress and face and soul, which changes,

never repeats itself, and is always new. He stopped on the corner and watched the crowd surge by. Watched, until, in dazed and dreamy thought, he saw without seeming to see. Then he startled and paled, and almost reeled, for a face went by, and a faultless figure so like Thetty Vick's, his Thetty's, that his heart gave four quick thumps, then skipped a beat and again beat on faster than it had done before. But no, it was not Thetty, for this one looked him full in the face and had walked demurely by. Neither was the dress Thetty's ; it was rich and stylish, and had such a modish air. He walked rapidly down the avenue past her ; he could not resist the temptation to look again, and he played now the first deceit of his life, this man of twenty-nine years, for he stopped at a standing showcase of neckwear and pretended to be looking at ties as he waited for her to pass by ; he peered through and around the case at the face so like his idol on Sconset farm. And not until within arm's-reach of him did the eyes seem to look up, then she quickly lifted her eyes to his and said in a voice of sweetest tone, "Hullo, my love!" She stopped and stood beside him, pretending to also seek ties ; she just touched his arm, and with an air of easy freedom began to converse in an undertone and in language too obvious to be misunderstood. John had not uttered a word, nor did he speak now ; he tried to appear not to hear. He stepped between the show window and the case and slid away down the avenue. When he reached Thirteenth Street corner and turned round it out of her sight, he almost ran up the block to Fourth Avenue. In this abnormal state of mind, he was almost a crazy man. (Men whose thoughts are

turned in toward themselves—whose thoughts for a short relief go out to be only again thrust cruelly back—for the moment at least, go mad.)

Was it possible that such a face and figure, so exactly like Thetty Vick's, could cover a soul so black? It was like mixing the perfumes of Sconset farm with the odors of gutter and gas-pipe trench. Poor John! He had read without thinking of "Magdalen." To him a woman like this seemed created, not made thus. If he had ever thought of such social outcasts at all, it was that they were born so. His training and nature, his trusted and trusting heart, had taught him, with never a thought of pity, to hate such a woman; but how horribly different it seemed when here came one in the very image of Thetty; trading on such a face, fixing commercial value on such a figure. With the voice of an angel, trailing the sacred word love in the dust. Was the soul of *such* an one black? No, John, not black of heart this woman, this property of whoever buys; but soiled, horribly soiled. And this one at least, if you knew the truth, is indeed a soiled dove. The helpless victim of a beastly man. The even sadder, more pitiable victim, outcast, of an unforgiving family, church, society, that has *shoved* her out and *kept* her out, and has made of her (they would have us think) the "terrible example" of disobedience; forced or willing disobedience to their pharisaical exactions of hypercritical and ungenuine morality and virtue. We should take timely heed, and be at least just, lest those whom we ourselves make outcasts revenge themselves. Some day, when society totters and its foundations are shaken, their opportunity will come.

Though Thetty might *think* it impossible, and John might *swear* it so, yet it really might have been Thetty, herself, and not Thetty's image, soiled,—if a brutal person and a helpless state and a cursing world had made it so ; and just the thought of it was revolutionizing John's mind. It was that which made him run, and then made him walk, and then caused him finally to stop, and now made him think as he never before had thought.

CHAPTER VII.

A MIDSUMMER BOARDERS' FIRST NIGHT. ETTA FOYLE'S DREAM
IN CHURCH.

It is little more than a quarter of a mile from the railroad station at Sconset to the house of Joel Vick, but there were trunks and luggage to come, the boarders expected to ride, and the well-worn path by the roadside was dry and dusty, so Farmer Vick with the three-seated wagon was down at the station on Monday afternoon, awaiting the train. The locusts were rasping the air and the corn-leaves rustled dryly. The sun burned down, and the pitch fried out from the knots in the platform floor. A hawk sailed high overhead in the sky, but never a bird made sound. It was three o'clock of this July day when the distant hum of a train was heard and it grew to a roar; then a toot, toot, toot, shook the summer air, and the New York train swung round the curve, rolled up to the station, and stopped. It was a veritable crowd—for a country town—that came hurrying off the train, and with baskets and bags and fuss and noise were distributed among the queer old vehicles awaiting them, and driven in flying dust away to their several summering homes.

Those who had been promised a place at Farmer Vick's were on hand, every one. The wagon was soon filled, and yet some were left, who must walk or wait until the farmer should return for the trunks. After the

all-round greetings, Etta Foyle handed her trunk-check to Paul, who was there to look after the baggage, and with her small grip-sack and parasol she walked up the road alone. She had declined to ride, preferring to walk under the shade of the maples in the old familiar path so pleasantly well remembered. She passed Mr. Vick, nodded and smiled, as he started back for the trunks ; and she heard the chattering babel of tongues, the laughter and stamping about of the noisy lot on the porch and in the house ; their witty remarks, frivolous talk and shouts of confusion and mirth. She heard jests that were flavored with the vinegar and gall of sarcasm. Jokes, that carried and but half concealed a sting. But, never mind that : the air was pure, the sky was clear, the grass was green, and Nature, the Earth, the dear old full-bosomed mother of us all, was out in her very best dress. *She* rustled her garments with every passing zephyr, and fairly laughed a welcome to Etta May Foyle. So did Mother Vick and Thetty and Maggie and all the others, for that matter, boarders and all. Who would refuse a welcome to her ? Sure enough, it costs a struggle to be good and self-helpful and true, yet what a pleasure it is to know that from pauper to prince we all respect and love the kind, heroic, persistent and true. Etta's heart fairly swelled with the joy of it all, and a great bunch seemed to swell up in her throat. She wanted to laugh, but had to cry, and gazed out of the window with tears in her eyes. The last of the new-comers and their baggage soon arrived. Compliments flew, for it was quite a loving and lovely set of eleven women, four men, a thirteen-year-old boy and a baby, that sat down to the six o'clock supper at

Farmer Vick's, this "midsummer boarders" "first night."

A little gossipy wrangle, of course, ensued about the allotment of rooms. Why could not A have this? Or B the other? And it was "awfully mean" to let C have that. Too big and barny; too narrow and small; too many windows; no light at all. The hot sunny side, or dreadfully cramped; or the shady side and probably damp. They said more than enough and, when all else was said,

"Well, we'll have to endure it," then turned out their lamps and turned into bed. But Etta slipped out into the kitchen with Maggie, for she was quite at home with them. She helped Patience put away the dishes, and then she and Thetty went out to the "pound-sweet apple tree," got into the great hammock together, and had "a real good visit." You women know what that means, but most of the men do not, and I will explain it for them. It is a rehearsal of what has passed, and a picturing of things to come; and fraternity, trust and sympathy, when sundered hearts have come home together. Of course, before the girls had arranged their hair for the night in the slant-ceiling attic room, and before Etta's new gowns had been shaken out and discussed, she knew all about John and his trials, the old story of "love and wait," of the pitiful struggle John was having, though neither of these knew how little of the whole sad truth he had written. The farmer's daughter could trust Etta, and for that matter, every one did. She was frequently surfeited with sorrowful confidences, though she surely had troubles enough of her own.

A week of delightful days flew by. Etta already be-

gan to toll off the vanishing holidays, counting backward from the close of her leave of absence. "Only eight," said she, and then, "Only seven days more," and then, "Only six."

A quiet, fraternal peace had reigned during the week in the boarding-house. But storms were a-brew, gossip was increasing, and scandal, that devil-tongued monger of mischief poisoned the air with whispers of evil she dared not speak aloud. Sunday had come. "The boys" were up, and the husbands, too; and the road between Rush House and Sconset farms was alive with pedestrians, wheelmen and driving parties. The Sabbath was less a holy day than holiday.

Widow Craft was out in a Scarborough drag from the Rush House stables with Gertie and Jennie, all in the richest outing finery of white admiral caps, wide, low-rolling collars and sailor knot ties, blouses, and soft, clinging skirts of white India silk, long white gloves, and parasols of white brocade with rich silken fringe. Their bay cob arched his neck and stepped high, with the ginerly pride of a thoroughbred. They drove up and down and fluttered about like white mud-butterflies around a puddle. Mrs. Ponsby was out, and drove up that way with her gay and stylish gallant. And Philip Wendt, the ship-broker's son, drove up from "The Rush" in an English cart to call on Mrs. Dorrance, and of course took her out for a drive. He brought her a message from Dorrance, that Watson the clerk was sick, that a mass of unanswered correspondence required his Sunday attention, and he could not come up until next week. Johnny rebelled because he could not go with his mother to ride, and got fifty cents for remaining at home, which he did not

do, but spent the money for candy and cigarettes down at the Sconset station. Ruth was charged not to let baby get into the dirt nor the medicine chest, and away went the matronly head of the Dorrance family, all dimples and smiles and bareness, with her wavy brown, loosely-coiled hair caught up with a diamond pin ; with freshly-curled bangs and powder that showed a little at her ears and around the base of her pretty, proud nose, in company with as *blasé* and loud-looking a man as a Gutenberg Race-track could show. She did not return again until near twelve that night ; and oh, how the gossips talked. Mr. Tendril and wife lolled about in the chairs and read novels and whispered and cooed. And, mostly to please Mrs. Vick, Etta rode down to the country church in the three-seated wagon, with Paul to drive, and with all the Vicks but Thetty and "Pa."

The young minister had a callow look, such a made-up, smooth-shaven face, and spoke in measured, clerical tones, one pitched low and now another pitched high, and a nasal strain in both. His coat, his collar and even his trousers were a struggle of clerical forms. Cedar evergreens hung about, faded and dusty and lorn. There was drowsiness in the swinging rhythm of the minister's tones and in all the air. He preached from the text, "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." "Suffer all things in patience. Endure all things for the joy that is set before you. Patiently suffer, and wait for your sure reward in the Home beyond the skies." And the good old farmers responded with a hearty, "A—a—a—men !" Though Etta Foyle, "poor, benighted soul," could not think for the life of her, why God had made such a beautiful world for

only the bad to enjoy. She could not see, with her "untrained" eyes, how ignorance, poverty and want, and their inevitable product of evil and crime, could elevate man again into the "likeness of God." She felt sure the good little preacher desired to be sincere ; would like to do unto others as he would have others do unto him, but she knew that he did not and that he could not, while life was "*a battle*" to live. For in his very next breath he spoke of "the battle of life." He urged them to be "at peace" with God and the world. (She was getting uncontrollably drowsy)—“*At peace, —in the battle of life,*”—and her eyelids went down ; then she roused a little as a roistering party went by. And her thoughts were again getting confused when a robin called for its mate, and she wondered if she had a mate somewhere, needing and calling for her. She thought of the love of poor struggling John for the hope-fed farmer girl ; and of Thetty's trusting faith. She thought of the comforting power of a father's love, which, alas ! she had never known. And then of the Heavenly Father's love (amid pleasant thoughts her *heart sang*), of His love for every one. Then she thought of the strife of men, and the battle to live, and knew in her heart of hearts that it was not God's plan, but the errors of man ; and that He never purposed it so,—a torture of pain, for a heavenly gain ; nor had made it a curse to be blest. The preaching minister's monotone seemed to float about in the musty air. She heard the hum of insects and the twitter of birds outside ;—the loo-loo-loo of a cow on a pasture hill, and in a dim, dim way, heard the preacher say :

“ You may trust Him ; for as you sang in your earlier praise, He will guide you with His eye—

Then Etta, so weak and weary, fell fast asleep and dreamed. (It is said that in dreams the mind is in part awake and is in part impressed and controlled by its surroundings.) The last glimpse of her eyes, awake, had fallen on a trefoil oriel window of tinted glass ; blue, and milky-white, and pink, in the gable above the pulpit, high over the preacher's head. And her sleeping eyes looked on in a dream, as the oriel widened and brightened, was opalescent with the light of love, and became a watchful, tireless eye ; (the service goes on) "the Eye that never sleeps." The depth of its pitying sorrow was sad and the depth of its love so sweet. And beneath it she saw a world of men, with warring hands in strife. And heard women's groans, and children's moans, (during the responses, Amen) and a terrible "battle of life." And over it all, there sounded the call (the hymn announced) of a loving Father's voice, (during the reading of the hymn) "Look, for The Way I have made for you."

(While the hymn is being read :)

"Look for The Way I have made for you,
And rejoice, My Children, rejoice!
The wrong and the cure, is an open book,
If you'll look, My Children, look.
O, pity the blind, and led of the blind,
As they wallow about in the ditch
While the bounty I've laid in the World I've made
For you, is rich, so rich."

(During the prelude played by the organist :)

And then, for a moment, a holy calm and a peaceful sense of rest ;
Then, the spheres of the Universe sounded a Psalm
Of "the way" for the World to be blest.

And the tones of an organ, great and grand,
 Shook the air and the sea and the land ;
 Trembled the stars, in the vaulted Heaven,
 With the harmonies true, which God has given,
 "O, listen, My Children, and look."

(The singing of the hymn :)

Then a cadence of Angels, in minor tone,
 Chanted "the way," there is but one,
 "Be just! Be just! Be just!"

(During the long closing prayer :)

"Are ye not children of mine?" saith the Lord,
 "Then read from the law of Worlds, my word.
 Do I cast off to starve, a crippled son ?
 No place at My board for a foolish one ?
 Could I offer to greedy and cunning, a prize,
 And the trusting and honest and earnest, despise ?
 The tempted and fallen, sick and sore
 I forgive, and I plead to them, 'Sin no more.'
 Princess or pauper, to Me are one ;
 Are not you My daughter, and you My son ?
 Because one must hobble and one may run,
 Do I offer the prize to the stronger one ?
 You, greedy and strong, how dare you be rough ?
 My bounty is plenty and more than enough.
 Why scramble and grab in a blind, mad scare ?
 Would you plunder the table, and turn down the chairs ?
 And to hungry brothers, deny a sup,
 'Till they pay *you*, a price, to turn them up ?
 There's a seat and a feast for every one.
 For you, My daughter, and for you, My son."

(During the pronouncing of the benediction :)

You may see "the way," if you will, and trust,
 But naught will avail, except ye be just.
 The wrong, and the cure, is an open book,
 I plead with you, children, look ! Do look !

(During the rustle of dresses, as the congregation rises and moves out of the church :)

Then, a rustling sound of the chanter's scrolls,
And a moving air, as of passing souls,
As the pitying, "Sleepless Eye" looks on.

And Etta awakened with the rustling of dresses, and the moving about of the people, for the service was closed. She arose from her seat and moved out of the pew behind Paul ; out of the churchy smell into the sweetness of Nature's gifts, under a summer sky. But the eye of her mind still saw the look of pitying love that shone from the oriel window, with promise of dawn, from above. Dawn of a better day, when life shall not be a fight ; when brother shall cherish brother, and right shall be known to be right.

Ah, that sermon had given her *rest*. "He giveth His beloved rest."

CHAPTER VIII

PAUL. A CHARACTER STUDY.

SHORTLY after "the folks" arrived home from church, they had luncheon ; just Mrs. Vick, Thetty, Patience, Maggie and Etta Foyle. The twins, Candace and Trys, had gone to Sunday School. Mr. Vick was at table, so also was Paul Hardhand. Paul was one of "the hands" at Mr. Vick's, at twenty dollars a month and board. Now that the house was full of boarders, he slept at his own home. Johnny Dorrance was at the railroad station, telling "big city" yarns to the wide-eyed little country boys, and was swelling about with "big boy" swagger and bluff, smoking cigarettes. The boarders, except Etta Foyle, were all away driving or cycling or walking over the hills. This smaller number at table made a kindly and cosy set, quite enjoyable, by contrast with the confusion and unhome-like meals of the week just past. Now there was more room, more freedom, and they could be natural.

There was talk about sermons,
And talk about hops ;
Talk about bonnets, and onion crops,
Chat about various girls and their beaux,
And of wonderful bargains down at the stores.

Seldom did Mr. Vick or Paul have a chance to slip in a word, yet Paul's tell-tale face showed that he followed and relished the conversation as keenly as he

relished his meal. Paul was a capital audience. It is a rare virtue—he listened well, and you knew it, too, for his face lighted up or was sad, or laughed, or looked thoughtful, or frowned, or was swept over with lines of a pitying, sympathetic earnestness, though he made no sound. Indeed he had a wonderful face. The play of thought and emotion over it was almost fascinating. If one watched him very closely, however, he colored with embarrassment, and so the observer felt inclined to glance at him quickly, then look away, so as to catch in his face the effect and reflection of what had been uttered. He had an active mind, but suffered with a restraining timidity, a strained self-consciousness. He was born afraid of himself. We frequently meet, among our fellows, persons with rich, profound, mental resources, wrapped about with the selfishness of silence. Such majestic strength, wasted, may well excite our pity, but it does not command our respect, and the world profits little by such lives. Only a spiritual or intellectual cataclysm suffices to bring such a person out from himself; then he becomes great. The unfortunate eccentricity affects all the details of his life. If, for instance, Paul, after silently culling among “womanly wares,” should at last find a woman who embodied his exacting ideal, he would fall down and worship her; worship from afar, not daring to approach, and would humiliate and belittle himself, with his mental comparison. If the prize, undemanded by him, was caught away by another, he would either go down into the agony of despair and destroy his own life—while none but himself would ever know why—or he would rise up out of the fiery ordeal, cleansed of the dross of his self-consideration, filled with the broadest

humanitarianism, the clearest perception of the true purposes of life, and make a grand man. The gold of such a character is imprisoned as in quartz rock; it must be crushed and pass through the fire, or it will yield nothing. He was afraid. Afraid some one would say, or perhaps only think, his gold was bogus coin. He listened, looked, thought, read, took all things in, gave very little out. Selfishness and pride made him their prisoner, not only robbed him of liberty, but directed his acts and conversation. He was keenly conscious of his ability and powers, but unwilling to employ them, lest he be misunderstood, maligned, and his pride be humiliated. No purification of such an one but by fire. While nuggets of gold may be picked up in the loose sand, we refuse to pound quartz rock for them. Such characters as Paul Hard-hand are very generally ignored by a busy world. It costs too much effort to bring them out. Yet, when an earthquake fate overtakes them and rends the rock, the very finest of gold comes forth, and they rise into the grandest manhood.

During the table talk Mr. Vick made a humorous shot at the three bachelor brothers, and called Paul's the most hopeless case. Paul looked furtively up from his plate, smiled, looked down, and took another spoonful of creamed strawberries. Then good Mrs. Vick, in a bantering tone, said, "The last may be first and the first may be last,"—referring to Proctor, John and Paul. "Who knows?" And she continued, "I don't think Paul really knew himself what he was doing, but I saw him yesterday evening down at Munson's store, with most attentive eyes and ears, watching the pretty face and drinking in the sparkling witticisms of that cute

little Katie McAuliffe. I tell you, girls, waters are deep that run so still ; better keep your eyes on Paul." Paul looked up again, arched his eyebrows a little, smiled, and responded facetiously, "That's all right."

Etta Foyle looked at him and thought—not aloud, if you please, O, no,—"What a funny man he is. He has an intelligent face, too. I had hardly noticed it before. It is almost fascinating, but it has a sort of hypnotic charm—dangerous. I don't like it. I should be afraid of such a man. When he looks at one he looks so quickly, penetratingly ; you feel that he is entirely too conscious of all that he has seen and heard, and even more than that, his eyes seem to say, 'I know what you think, all you think, and I also know how very little of what you think you will speak.'"

True enough, it was impossible for a girl of that trustful frankness, characterizing Etta Foyle, to like such a man. Thetty, in her outspoken way, and her willingness to chide him by the invidious comparison made the remark,

"John and Paul are not the least bit alike."

Paul once more looked up quickly this time and seemed to note the look of thankful exultation in Thetty's face. Just a trace of a frown and a sad look came over his countenance, which Thetty noticed, and with that natural outgoing pity, impossible for her to deny even to a wounded reptile, she said, reassuringly,

"Never mind, Paul, 'though the herd shall forsake thee, thy home is still here.'"

They all laughed at the puny joke, and arose from the table as Mr. Vick remarked,

"Paul is afraid he won't say the right thing, and so he 'says nothing and saws wood.'" Farmer Vick had hit that nail precisely on the head,

Shortly after three o'clock, the boarders, one after another, began to come in and required table attentions. They chatted and moved about, and the all-round gossip began. It continued and made more than enough both in quantity and quality to fill the bad chapter of a book. But life has its bad chapters, and it is an unjust picture that neglects a truth. What one sees and feels and knows, one must believe, even though he would rather not. Let us paint the picture truly; or throw down the brush.

CHAPTER IX.

BUTTERFLIES. TWO STORM-CENTERS OF A TEMPEST.

JOHNNY DORRANCE, hungry, ill-tempered, shouting, and reeking with the smell of cigarettes, came in from his sensational demonstration down at the railroad station. Ruth with the baby-wagon and its cargo arrived. The Widow Craft and her chickens came flying up the road ; came flying down from their lofty perch on the cart ; and came flying into the house with most marvelous self-satisfaction. The fat little widow seemed quite ready to flap her wings and crow, she was so swelled with pride ; so proud was she of having attracted the *public attention*—a success which others had sought and in which she had attained superiority. She did not exactly crow, though she uttered sounds as like it as hens commonly do when they attempt to crow, and then seem to remember that they are not the crowing bird. They make an unnatural sound, amusingly absurd. One of the chickens, however, Gertie, did whistle a little, happily, as she came up the path, but was stopped short by a sharp look from her mother. An unuttered suggestion of the fate awaiting “whistling girls and crowing hens.” Gertie’s whistle was not really a whistle of contempt for girls less favored than herself. That is to her credit. But it was, nevertheless, an omen of a very “bad end.” She whistled because she could not help it. She could

not help it because she was so happy. She was so happy because Mr. Wendt, the broker's son, had noticed, with enthusiastic interest, the Craft turn-out. He had driven repeatedly past them, raised his hat with the sweetest politeness, and made no effort to conceal his admiration of Gertie, herself. She really was a pretty, soft little pink-and-white creature, with blue-gray eyes and a wonderfully pretty mouth. Lips with curves like Cupid's bows, and rosy red, but too full — quite too full — it was their only fault. Mr. Wendt had gazed at Gertie as they passed for the fifth and last time, with a hungering look, as a cat might look at a canary. He arched his eyebrows and smiled so captivatingly that Gertie's little heart fluttered; and how could she help smiling back her thankfulness? Had they not come out and driven up and down to be admired? If not for that, then why all this trouble of dress and parade? If one gains what is sought, shall they not rejoice? Poor little Gertie; she noticed, too, as they passed this fifth time, that Mrs. Dorrance had put off her smiles, and that the merry dimples had drawn out into lines almost like a frown. Gertie looked back after they had passed, and saw Mrs. Dorrance, with very serious face turned toward Mr. Wendt, earnestly addressing him. They did not pass Gertie and her party again.

Six o'clock had come. Supper was waiting, and Mrs. Dorrance had not returned. Johnny was bumptious, commanding and disagreeable. The baby was cross and fretty. Ruth looked weary, worried and dispirited. The serenity of the day was rapidly clouding up with complications. There were real clouds in the sky, too, dark and threatening, and away off sounds

of thunder. The air was still, as in dread suspense. Nature held her breath, and even the winking leaves of the trees had ceased to move.

Mr. and Mrs. Tendril came hurrying in with their hands full of field-daisies, cat-tails and calamus root. Tendril, the boy-husband, looked weary. His silk socks and patent leather low shoes were soiled with marsh mud. One knee of his white flannel trousers bore the green marks of grass stain. Mrs. Tendril, the girl-wife, looked cross and pouty. Her white-flannel outing skirt was stuck full of pitchfork burrs, and disfigured with yellow-weed dust.

Clouds rolled silently up and over each other, black, gray and brazen green. Threatening little circles of dust swirled round in the road. Then all things seemed to wait. Now came a rushing roar of wind. The air was filled with dust. A blind of the parlor window flew round and shut with a frightening crash. Two or three monstrous drops of rain splashed down onto the floor of the porch, as if the storm-devil had spat before doubling up his fists to knock things about. The hens sprang from their fluttering wallow in the dust of the road and with tails bent downward, loped across the door-yard to their coop. One hen, of the household brood, had not reached home yet, however, and her littlest chicken, here in the coop, was squawking as if it were being swung about by the leg. Ruth took it off upstairs to its roost, and Johnny followed. The rain came down in torrents; then, a blinding flash, an instant of the blackest darkness, and a thundering crash. Tendril wife screamed, trembled and clung firmly to Tendril husband.

Mrs. Craft cried, "O my! wasn't that terrible?"

She was very pale, and she joined her party as they hurried off up to their rooms, the Tendrils following.

Thetty Vick said, with enthusiasm, "O, wasn't that grand?" as Etta smiled, and took Thetty's hand.

Mr. Vick anxiously remarked to his wife, "Ma, I'm afraid Mrs. Dorrance will get drenched to her very skin."

To which suggestion Patience added, "And her skin won't look half so pretty after it's drenched."

The twins, in the corner, giggled, and their mother reprovingly said, "Patience, Patience," and looked seriously as she added, "I hope no harm will befall her. She is in very great danger. It's a terrible time to be out, and without an umberel."

And Paul, even Paul, made this cynical comment, "I hope they won't be 'called in.' They are a precious pair for the Lord when He comes to gather His jewels."

Every one seemed to regret what Paul had said, and he was again confirmed in his judgment, that it was better to say nothing. Outside, it flashed, darkened and crashed again. Then all kept still and listened and looked. It rained continuously until nine o'clock, stopped for a few minutes, when it began again in a drizzling way: omen of an all-night rain. One after another, each went off to bed but Mother Vick. She did not retire but sat awaiting Mrs. Dorrance, when she should come in, and as Mrs. Vick said, to "give her a cup of tea, poor soul."

This storm was, also, a moving force in quite another scene. On Bedford Hill, fifteen miles away, the cool breeze of an almost mountain air had swayed and played with the great branched forest trees of the wood-crowned hill. A rugged road wound its way up the

eastern slope, with dense woods and underbrush at either side. A somewhat level plateau crowned the hill, and the road went straight across the top and wound its way down the western side. A high-seat English "village-cart" came slowly up the eastern approach to the little clearing on the hilltop. The perspiring horse leisurely trotted a little way along the level of the plateau. The driver drew up to the roadside, hitched his horse to a sapling tree and assisted a middle-aged lady out of the cart and over the fence. They laughed and chatted as they worked their way through underbrush and forest, to a projecting rock, a quarter mile away on the hillside, that fronted and overlooked the beautiful valley below. The gentleman threw his light overcoat onto the rock, and the two sat down upon it side by side, with their feet hanging over the edge of the projecting rock and just touching the tops of the sumach bushes below it. In admiration of the beautiful scene, in gossip, nonsense, wit and pleasantry, they chatted; and the time rolled on. Back of the sitting couple were mighty hemlocks, maples, and the stillness of the forest. In front, an open sky. From a rather free fraternity, they drifted into conversation about the marriage state; its fettering force and its exactions. The humdrum character of some husbands was referred to. The tedious characteristics of a certain New York business man were discussed. And the criticised person was none other than the husband of this delectable lady. To all wifely hardships, restrictions and cause of complaint, this gentleman, this most excellent friend, lent willing ear and tenderest sympathy. He was such a kind and almost affectionate confidant. The lady was profuse in expressions of her

admiration for men of life and stir and social ambition. Men who had some fun in their composition. And she looked so bewitchingly into the eyes of this man, and was radiant with the satisfaction which the conquest of his heart gave her. She read victory in the evident admiration of her, which shone from his eyes. What a delicious morsel is victory, when we forget the cost! His arm stole gently round her, he was profuse with expressions of hearty pity for her dwarfed life, her fettered soul. The encircling arm pressed her closer, to express, as words could not, his admiration of her heroic patience, his *sympathy* for her imprisoned life. Sitting beside her, he gently, with his freed hand, drew her head over onto his shoulder. She turned her protesting face toward his, and was about to speak in remonstrance; he quickly closed her mouth with a kiss. One rational thought came to her like a flash. The thought of what she was and where she was. She sprang to her feet. Over her face came a maddening play of mixed emotions, anger and shame predominating. She stepped away and stood gazing at him hardly a second, when earth and air rebuked them both. The great storm had rolled up from the west, unnoticed, hidden by the hill and the great forest behind them. Black and threatening, the storm-cloud had rolled over them, and like a lid of darkness was rapidly closing down over the great blue eye of a summer sky. A deep-drawn sigh of wind in the tree-tops she heard, as she sprang to her feet, and with that thought, that instant look which she gave him, came a burning flash from the heavens, a crash, and then darkness. And again and again, with hardly an instant of interval between them. With the roar of a

tempest, the rain came down in swashing torrents. The great trees threshed the air with swinging branches and bent their great bodies forward low, as if to thresh the earth with blows of punishment. The frightened couple were dashed about and nearly thrown off the bluff. He caught her hand and they struggled through the woods beneath the crackling trees and falling branches, toward the road of safety and the vehicle they had left an hour before. As they neared the road there came a flash and crash together ; blind darkness ; the earth shook and trembled ; sight came back to them ; —but a few rods before them the top and branches of a great forked elm lay strewn about, and there was left standing of what a moment before was lofty and beautiful only a barked, stripped, naked, splintered body. Only a wreck. Dignity, grandeur, verdure, beauty, all had gone down. Only a dying remnant was there ; a sight to touch our pity. Minnie Dorrance fell with the shock, and swooned with fright. Quickly struggling to her feet, she saw Philip Wendt running some rods ahead, in wild haste, toward the cart. He saw her rise, fall and rise again, then he ran back, grasped her arm, carried or dragged her to the vehicle, lifted her in, and drove away toward Sconset. The mountain storm rushed on after and over them with the pelting punishment of the elements.

About half-past eleven that night, this same cart and its cargo came dashing up the roadway in the darkness, and stopped at the gate of Farmer Vick's home. Mrs. Vick hastened to the door with a lighted lamp. Philip Wendt sprang out of the cart, helped out the limp, wet, bedraggled, fat lady, walked to the door with her in the light of Mrs. Vick's lamp, bade her good-

night, bowed to Mrs. Vick, hurried back to the cart and drove off into the darkness.

Mrs. Dorrance literally tumbled into the nearest chair in a most demoralized state of mind and body.

"You poor, unfortunate woman," said the good, mother-hearted Mrs. Vick. "You are just soaked through and through."

"Yes, I am," Mrs. Dorrance replied, sharply, "and I know I shall be down sick for it."

"Was there no shelter for you? No chance of escape from the storm?" asked Mrs. Vick.

"No; not until we had driven a mile in the rain, then we drove under an open shed and sat there in the cart for nearly an hour. Then the rain ceased and we started on; but it soon began again, in a drizzling way, and just as we neared an Irishman's shanty, a half mile or more back towards Scarborough, near the railroad, it poured again. *He* saw a light in the house, hitched the horse, and we went in and waited there until the storm, just now, diminished a little."

"Why, my dear woman, where were you when the storm came on?" asked Mrs. Vick.

"We were away over on Bedford Hill, when the storm broke upon us. I had no idea the distance was so great. We had walked from the roadway away over through the woods and bushes, to Long Look Rock. While we sat there enjoying the landscape and chatting for an hour or so, the storm crept up behind us, and like an army of furies caught us up. We were swung round and dashed to the ground repeatedly, *he* (she did not speak his name now) caught my hand and we struggled through the tempest and falling branches of the woods, toward the roadway. At a terrible moment,

a lightning flash shocked me. Frightened, I swooned and fell. He ran and left me. He would have forsaken me, there, but that I rose again. He saw my eyes were on him. Then he came back, dragged me to the cart, and shoving me in, drove off. The instant hatred of that brute which possessed me drove me almost wild. I wanted to shriek in his face ‘Villain! coward !’ but I dared not. I believe he would have left me there alone, alive or dead. Disgust and horror at the revelation of that person’s selfish character sickens me. I am alive, and here. Thank Providence, for a tempest that saved me from falling into the damning power of that creature. The power he might have had on my life.—Where is Johnny ? ”

“ In bed,” answered Mrs. Vick, “ and Ruth and baby, also, hours ago. Get off your wet clothing this instant. Drink this hot tea, poor creature.”

“ What will these people *think* of me ? ” whimpered Mrs. Dorrance.

And she burst into tears, then drank her tea, looked into Ruth’s room on her way to her own, gazed for a minute on the sleeping face of her girl babe on the nurse’s arm, burst into tears again, went to her own room and cried herself to sleep.

CHAPTER X.

CHARACTER STUDIES. SOME QUEER BIRDS. A TAXIDERMIST.

THE castle of Bartholomew McAuliffe with the sunlight on it, and the dear old funny face outside the door, were embodied fun and good-humor ; but in darkness and storm, water-soaked and dripping, its humor was very grim.

That night of the terrible storm, two gulls, threshed with the tempest, driven with the storm, soaked, and with feathers rumpled, dashed into the reefed sails, dropped down onto the deck, and fluttered into the cabin of an old stranded hulk, the saved wreckage of a well-built ship that had been cast up, beached, on an unused bit of a foreign shore, and permitted to lie there peacefully ; secure in its harmless awkwardness. There are a few such hulks to be found along the coast border of organized society. The commander of this stranded craft had no papers to prove his right to land anywhere. But here he was, old Bat McAuliffe, Irishman, foreigner, among the native-born of America, on "their land," and they had not driven him off. He treated them pleasantly. They did not need the old beach. He amused them, and so they let him lie where he had stranded. The nearest approach to squatter sovereignty that this republic has so far had to show. If the devil is a land animal, then this old hulk lay between the devil and the deep sea. The commander of

the craft had no rights on land and no power to go to sea.

All sorts of birds blown seaward with storms off land, or blown landward exhausted with tempests off the sea, dropped onto the deck of his craft and found there a present salvation and a haven. Old Bat McAuliffe, by very force of circumstances and by virtue of an investigating and philosophizing tendency of mind, became deeply interested in the study of the exceedingly human birds that fell onto his deck. Quite an ornithologist, as it were—a sort of mental taxidermist as well. He had stuffed many rare specimens and set them up in his memory, to further study and ponder over, while he smoked his comically short pipe.

There were birds of song and birds of prey. Human penguins—great, clownish birds that tumbled and waddled, and tried only to save themselves. Eagles—so very dignified, that flew and alighted high, commanded respect, had ugly looking beaks and talons, with which they tore the flesh of other creatures ; other creatures which were “intended” for eagles’ food. It was so unaccountable to the mind of old Bartholomew, why all the other creatures treated this beaked, taloned highwayman of the air as if he were “the king of birds,” and seemed to think reverence and obedience and fear of him a duty. He was really a foolish bird, a club would end his career, or, as kindlier cure; a little cord of justice would make of him a staring, wondering prisoner; and yet, all skulked or bowed down or shrieked surrender when he alighted in the rigging, folded his wings, balanced himself clumsily, turned his head a little to one side, and looked down on the other birds. The old philosopher saw harmless, frightened little

birds run and hide for fear of this "king of birds" and his miserable screech ; and he heard parrots in mindless mimicry repeating this screech over and over again, until the whole bird-family were frightened into helplessness, and ready, as a means of escape, to give up in surrender the flesh of some, if only others might be permitted to live.

Mr. McAuliffe was amused by the great wise-looking eyes of the owl, who gets credit for wisdom by simply *looking* wise, and does nothing, but, with much "fuss and feathers," catch a mouse ; says nothing except to utter a senseless, solemn "Whoot-toot-to whoot," which again is mistaken for wisdom, because he *looks* wise and is called wise, and so frightens more sensible birds with his owlish, solemn appearance of profound thinking. Yet he neither sees nor does anything in the light of day and truth, but sleeps.

Old Bat studied the cawing crows and the vultures that follow in the wake of ruin to feed upon the carcasses, half torn and cast aside by murderous birds. Those crows on the fence and in the tree-tops forever cawing, "Let well enough alone, I am quite satisfied with conditions as they are."

With heart of pity, and love of the natural and true, old Bat loved and helped to freedom, as far as he could, all the larks and birds of song. He would have freed them all, if he could ; but poor unfortunate, well-intentioned mortal, he did not know how to release them, though he knew very well that so many were captives and caged.

Here comes a pair from the mountain storm—vulture and crow. The rain was pouring. The dog-cart rolled up before the door, and before the McAuliffes

could cry, "Stand from under," Mrs. Dorrance came running and fluttering into the cabin with petticoats up to her knees, and a great wet, swishing tail of silks and lace and embroidered muslin, swinging and dripping water like an abandoned rudder. Philip Wendt came rapidly after her, but halted a moment at the door to look back after the horse and up at the tempestuous sky, as Mrs. McAuliffe offered Mrs. Dorrance a chair. Then he turned and, seeing Katie, made bluff and clumsy apology for their rude entrance and accepted the chair she proffered him."

"Well, well, me good leddie," said old Bat to Mrs. Dorrance, "'tis to call the priesht to shrive the sowl o' the dyin', or to ask the priesht to marry the livin', that colled ye out in the shtorum, nothin' less. An' I'm glad to give shelter to ye, whether 'tis wan or the other or nayther. That the shtorum is theyer and the shelter is here is agscuse enough, without other worrud. Honora, old 'ooman, set on a bite fer the gentleman and his *wife*." And old Bat looked inquiringly into the faces of his guests.

"No, no, thank you, we are not at all hungry; thank you, thank you, we only wish to wait a moment until the storm lessens a little," said Mrs. Dorrance.

"Sure ye are very welcome if ye are a-hungered, an' faith, 'tis little trouble to set it on again fer ye, such as there be."

Katie McAuliffe, with the easy grace of one more accustomed to life's refinements, appealed to Mrs. Dorrance, and in fascinating tone made proffer of hospitality. "'Tis very, very little trouble, I have but just now set away the food."

To which Mrs Dorrance replied, "Thank you, my

dear girl, I really could not eat at all. Fright and the wetting and anxiety have taken all appetite away, and we have but a little way farther to go ; up to Mr. Vick's on the Sconset road."

"Ah," said Katie, "then you are boarding there, I presume? Or a relative, perhaps?"

"Only a boarder. We have been out for a little drive, and were caught in the tempest."

"Sure, missuz," inquired the host, "woan't ye have a cup o' tay? and yer *husband*" (she started), "yer son" (she looked pained). "Ah, yarra, no ; beg yer pardon, ye're too young dresshed an' young lukin' fer that ;—yer frind,—yer gentleman frind." She looked with an almost frightened face at the little old man, as at a witch of penetrating wisdom who had read her whole story ; and she almost trembled. "Won't yere frind have a cup of warrum tay to kill the cauld he'll be likely to get from the wettin', or a drop of sperrits, may be?" And he looked with a funny twinkle from the corner of his eye at Mrs. Dorrance, as he jumped up from his seat and ran to a closet for a little flat bottle. He brought it, together with a little toy tumbler, which had one time been Katie's "Christmas," and handed both to Philip Wendt, with the remark, "I'm not overmuch a drinkin mon, meself, trayten an bein' trayted agin fer de silly fashin of it, but if ye were Father Mathew himself, in the state ye are, I'd offer ye a drop to mix wid the overmuch cold wather ye have, to give it a cheerier flavor an' to drive off the evil sperrits that fly about in sich weather as this. Help yerself, mon."

And Philip Wendt did so. He filled the little tumbler and drained it off ; filled and drained it again,

and again, until there was barely a gill left to keep the bottle wet. Old Bat never moved a muscle, nor showed the least regret for having offered the bottle, nor did he feel any. It was not his nature to do so, though the bottle was quite sufficient for his own wants for an entire year. He smiled to see with what a greedy relish the man drank. Mrs. Dorrance seemed shamed by the act. Katie, who was brushing the crumbs from the table, had her back toward them all just at this time, but such a roguish laugh was in her eyes that it ran over into her cheeks, and though the back of her head was toward Mrs. Dorrance, that lady looking past Katie's two pink ears saw that her cheeks were drawn up and puffed out at the top with the quiet laugh which Katie supposed she was hiding.

Having finished the bottle, Wendt said, in an off-hand manner, as one of his sort might thank a railroad train porter, "Thanks"; putting his hand into his pocket he drew forth a silver half-dollar and reached it toward Mr. McAuliffe.

Old Bat fired almost to anger with the insult, said with a courtesy unusual with him, "Put that in yer pocket. Me hoshpitality is poor enough;—bad cess to the mon as takes the mutton—but it's not for sale. The money would barren me hond. Good mon, put it up."

Philip Wendt was astonished. He was accustomed to the idea that money buys anything; that money settles everything; accustomed to see Irishmen of the poorer wards of a great city sell their votes even for a "city job", a few days employment on the public works, a petty political office, or for a few much-needed dollars; accustomed to seeing men (?) waiters and footmen, and

ushers, sell bows and smiles and slightest courtesy for "a tip." The boy in the barber-shop always gave Philip's coat two or three little pokes with a whisk broom, then looked or reached for his nickel. The hall-man would run out before Philip, and planting himself in the way, open the coach door and hold out his hand; or would grab his hat, brush the nap the wrong way and hold out his hand. Even the minister of a church for which Wendt had secured a loan—and had charged a good round commission for doing it—had hinted that for having thrown the profitable job in Wendt's way he ought to be given "a tip," out of the toll of the mortgage grist. Wendt could not fathom the novelty of this Irishman who refused an offered half-dollar, and who had some other and mysterious means quite unknown to Philip Wendt for the measuring of motives and sentiments and principles. Some other gauge than the dollar employed for all measures and purposes by Philip and his kind, and heretofore supposed by Philip to be the *almighty dollar*.

"Have this sate," said Bat, as he pushed a chair hospitably toward Wendt.

The novelty of the situation, as much as the novelty of the man, greatly amused Philip, and he fell into a more frank familiarity of conversation with Bat than he had ever before indulged toward an Irish workingman. Philip's *father* was the office-seeker and politician. He had done all the coddling, hand-shaking, and baby-petting work—among the voting poor of his ward. Philip, himself, had been spared all that bore. He had only been asked to eat the juicy fruits, after his "old man" had picked them.

"Don't suppose they make you pay much rent for

this property?" Philip Wendt remarked, in a questioning tone.

Old Bat replied, "Sure I calls it me own. Me own vine and fig-tree; me own, and the pig's in his pin."

"And how much land have you?" asked Phillip.

"As much as I like, along the railroad track."

"Sure, my man, you don't own the railroad do you?"

"No bother of the kind, mon."

"Nor the land?"

"No, or yes, as ye like. If Mishter Vick or Mishter Hardhand owns their land, then I owns mine, for a surer property. The margidge man drives them off whin he likes and takes their land whin he wants it, and he do take a good bit of their crops ivery year fer what he calls interesht, and I calls it rint. Nobody does drive me off, nor take from me the use of me fields,—though they may,—and none takes me crops but the shtore-man an' butcher an' baker and candlestick maker. They do pay me tithes, er taxes ye calls them, and takes their pay fer it out of me crops in the higher price they makes me pay fer the things I gets from thim; and I'm not makin' me a worrit, to make me lean, with the runnin' o' railroads or the ownin' of farms or managin' o' onmanigable min."

What a refreshingly funny old man!—what a silly, serious philosophy! thought Philip.

What a mud-waddling, dirty-billed, bright-breasted, quacking, float-about duck, thought Bartholomew as he noticed the great diamond on Philip's shirt front and listened to the rasping narrowness of his speech. How like the son of a lord this fellow seemed to him as he compared the man, with his recollection of that sort of bird, on the Island over the sea. Old Bat felt a sort

of condescending pity for the eating, sleeping, drinking, good-for-nothing, great coarse-sensed fellow.

And Philip in turn also felt a sort of patronizing pity for the "poor, ignorant, innocent, old Irishman," who did not even know the power that money wields,— poor soul.

And so each, patiently patronizing the other "poor ignorant fellow," took pains to be very kindly agreeable, each to the other. And each gently pumped information out of the other to satisfy his curiosity in such a social freak.

Old Bat was the cleverer man of the two. A veritable Yankee Irishman, for he made questions of his answers, and asked questions without seeming to do so ; and in the end, he had learned more of Philip's life and character than ever a stranger had before.

For many hours the rain poured down and forced the two scions of city society to accept the homely hospitality of the hovel. Minnie Dorrance, unrestrained by the formalities, unwatched by the eyes of social martinets, fell easily into the pleasant diversion of chatting with these two ladies. Women, she would call them afterward, or *persons*, more likely, if she mentioned them at all. She became fascinated with the freshness, animation, wisdom and wit of Katie McAuliffe, and would have given a fortune in exchange for a voice of such musically sweet and captivating tones. The rain lessened, at last. Then the worried look of misery came back into Mrs. Dorrance's face ; for before her mind rushed the trying thought of returning at such an hour, in such a plight, to her summer boarding-house. She arose with visible evidence of great nervousness, thanked the McAuliffes with extreme courtesy

for their hospitality, gathered her silken skirts up again, and went out the door ; Philip Wendt, merely holding a bit of her sleeve in his thumb and finger, and leading her so, went down through the wet grass, under a still dripping sky, to the cart. They drove away in the darkness.

Old Bat must needs ruminant, now. He chuckled, with an amusing little laugh, reached out his hand for Katie, who nestled up beside him, and with an arm about his neck, and her hand hanging listlessly over his shoulder, stood smiling down at him while he filled his pipe. Then she brought him a match, bent down and kissed the dear old kindly face and left him alone to his thoughts, while she and her mother chatted and made ready for bed.

Candace Vick, the mischievous little fun-hunter, was over next day, of course, to see old Bat and Katie, and she gave to the old man the little lacking information he had not already gotten from themselves, about the precious pair, and succeeded at last in getting him started upon his comical description of the couple, and the aspect they had presented to the mind of the crude philosopher. Candace laughed until she cried, and went home determined to repeat old Bat's description of it, but she never did, to her own satisfaction, nor could any one else have done so.

Something about the manner of the old man on this occasion was a mystery beyond Candace's comprehension. It was this :—old Bat, though he saw and appreciated the humor of it all, and could laugh until tears came into his eyes, seemed to pity them both at last, and, as near as was possible for him, looked sad. While Candace did not "pity them one bit," only laughed.

Very well, there are older children who condemn, or refuse to pity ; who are even possessed of a spirit of hatred of "their moral inferiors ;" who despise, and from their lofty seats of morality and culture look down contemptuously upon their falling, fallen, or foolish and erring fellow-beings. This is because we look only at the expression, the superficials, and not at the underlying cause of such social phenomena ; and are often thus terribly misguided in our judgment and our futile efforts for reform.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO STORM-CENTERS OF A SOCIAL TEMPEST. SOME THREADS OF THE WOOF OF OUR STORY.

MRS. DORRANCE was late next morning, and looked ten years older. All were nearly through or had finished their breakfast, when she came down. She ate alone. As she came through the hall and had her hand upon the knob of the dining-room door to open it, she heard, with her justly suspicious ears, words that made her hesitate ; Mr. and Mrs. Tendril, Mrs. Craft and her two daughters, Paul and Candace were still at the table.

Mrs. Vick was attending them.

The listening woman at the door heard Paul inquire, “Did Mrs. Dorrance get home ?”

“Yes,” answered Mrs. Vick, “and very wet. They were caught in the storm and had to drive all the way from Bedford Hill to Mr. McAuliffe’s before they got any house-shelter ; though they drove under a shed and waited some hours on the hillside.”

Candace inquired, “Mother, did they really stop at old Uncle Bat’s ?”

“Yes, Candace,” replied Mrs. Vick. And the twins laughed loudly, as Tryphy said :

“Wouldn’t it have been jolly fun to have seen it, and to hear old Bat catechise them ?”

Johnny Dorrance seemed confused as to what it all meant. Mrs. Vick looked reprovingly at Candace ;

and Johnny, so soon as he had finished his breakfast, went off towards the station, neglecting to first see his mother, perhaps, even, not thinking of her at all.

"If *I* had done so disgraceful a thing," remarked Mrs. Craft, "my hubby would have torn his hair out and have gone at once to a divorce court, as he ought." And this most immaculate little widow continued, "If she got wet, it served her right; she had no business driving about the country with that man; and she, too, with a family of young ones and a husband at home slaving to supply her with catchy finery."

"Who was that man?" asked Mrs. Tendril, "I thought he looked dreadfully common."

"Yes, 'loud,'" responded Mr. Tendril, "fearfully loud; in that great plaid suit, and yellow driving gloves. Do you know, he reminded me of the pugilist's trainer on a variety stage."

"Well, I s'pose she wanted to show off," said Tryphy, "but the end of the play, when Old Bat's lines came in, must have been awfully comical." Then a general laugh went round the table. Mrs. Vick looked pained and worried by the conversation.

Mrs. Dorrance, in the hall, took her hand off the door-knob and tiptoed back to her room; sobbed a little, and then came boldly down and entered the breakfast-room. She had distinctly heard Mrs. Craft's last words, and had an indefinite apprehension of the heedless gossip. As she entered, now, the sudden hush that came over all in the room, confirmed her worst suspicions. She sat down with lips firmly compressed, in a very apparent effort of self-control. Mrs. Vick poured her coffee, and with real anxiety asked after her health. The others had then passed out.

Mrs. Dorrance replied, "The drenching has hurt me less than the insulting gossip of that woman,"—referring to the little widow. "She is the meanest, gossiping scandal-monger and story-teller, and—and—I ever saw." She finished her meal in silence, and went immediately to Mrs. Tendril's room ; Tendril was on the piazza smoking ; and Mrs. Dorrance expressed to Mrs. Tendril her opinion, that Mrs. Craft was "a greasy old dumpling, a desperate and hopeless widow, with all she had in the world strung onto her back, her fingers and her ears as bait to catch a man with."

Mrs. Tendril nodded and looked yes, and Mrs. Dorrance continued, "O, Mrs. Tendril, if you could only have seen her yesterday, bobbing and dimpling and smirking right and left, and with those two loud-dressed hopefuls of hers, it would have made you sick. And that Gertie ! She's another chip of the old blockhead ; and grinned like a skeleton at every gentleman they passed, even at the gentleman driving with me. It was just shocking."

Through all this tirade Mrs. Tendril had interposed only nods or shakes of the head, a yes or a no, and "I can't bear that girl Gertie. Yes, indeed." And still the preacher of evil continued her voluble abuse ; her prayer for vengeance went on and on, and the little Tendril saint responded with her Amen "yes" and exclaimed "indeed," until all the stream of vengeance intended to deluge Mrs. Craft had slopped out and spent itself in the presence of little Mrs. Tendril. Then Mrs. Dorrance sank into a chair to catch her breath and regain her dignity, so as to meet Mrs. Craft, and crush her with the cool deliberateness of a self-possessed lady. Crush her right down to the earth,

and hold her down with her little foot, while with haughty contempt, she would detail to the little widow her evil work and moral deformities.

Stopping only to tap lightly on the casing of the opened door, she entered Mrs. Craft's chamber where the little widow sat, by an open window. Mrs. Dorrance bowed in a stately way, said nothing, and with a dignified swing stepped into the room. She sat down in a chair near an unoccupied window, and drew a long breath. Mrs. Craft arose, blushed, dimpled, bowed, and with her most bewitching smile said :

"How do you do? I am so worried about you. Did you get very wet? And O, wasn't the storm dreadful? I was frightened nearly to death, and flew to my room. I kept saying to myself, 'Poor Minnie Dorrance, if she should happen to be out in this, wouldn't it be terrible?' And then I thought : she is in such good hands, that I feel sure she has been safely sheltered at the Rush House ; and then I felt easier. We barely had time to get into this old hovel ourselves, and get our house wrappers on before the storm came, and the—and—"

Mrs. Dorrance showed an irrepressible desire to speak, and the voluble little widow came to a stop in midstream. "Mrs. Craft," began Mrs. Dorrance, in a slow, deliberate and marvelously distinct articulation, "Mrs. Craft, a lady, a married lady, of my position in society, would not be likely to go to the Rush House with an unmarried gentleman, even to escape a rain storm. While I might with perfect propriety take an open drive in the street, with the gentleman who came with messages from my dear husband, and who has his entire confidence. By that fact, as well as by

the kindness of his self-sacrifice and personal inconvenience in bringing letters and parcels to me from my husband, he was entitled to the courtesy which as a lady I could not deny, and cheerfully gave."

It had transpired that the rattling village-cart, in the quiet country road, at half-past eleven o'clock of the night before, had awakened Widow Craft from her peaceful sleep. She had peered out of her chamber window, and saw Mrs. Dorrance in her bedraggled state coming up the path to the door, with Mr. Wendt, under the bright lamp-light of Mrs. Vick's providential care. Little Widow Craft had opened her door noiselessly, crept stealthily into the hall,—in her night-robe,—leaned over the banister, and with head twisted sidewise, and ears sharply intent with curiosity, had heard every word, sigh, whisper and sob of Mrs. Dorrance's confession, so excitedly and thoughtlessly made to Mother Vick.

"Why, my dear," replied Mrs. Craft, "surely no one could criticise you for stopping at so proper a place as the Rush House, to get out of so terrible a storm, unless they were very evil-minded. I would not have hesitated to stop there under such circumstances."

"It is quite likely," replied Mrs. Dorrance, speaking louder and a trifle more rapidly; "it is quite probable. I might expect *you* to stop at the Rush House with a man to get out of the rain, or out of the sun, but *I* am not a person of that sort, Mrs. Craft."

"What do you mean, Minnie Dorrance?"

"I mean all I have said; and any one might expect nothing better of you. Any one who saw you yesterday, smirking up and down the road with those two bold, loud-looking daughters of yours; and—and, that

Gertie ogling and grinning at every man she saw, would expect *such* people to have no better morals nor sense than to go to the Rush House parlors with an escort ; but *my* position and culture do not encourage any such impudent proposition from an escort. I know all about the mean things you have said of me to Mrs. Tendril and to others in this house, Kate Craft ; and you are a very contemptible, gossiping, mischief-making person ; and—and if I hear any more of your scandalizing talk I will repeat it to my husband, and *he* will settle it with *you*!"

"You wouldn't go respectably to the Rush House out of the rain, hey?"

"No, indeed. I leave that for such as you and your pretty daughters."

"Yes, Minnie Dorrance, I am very glad you leave the public parlors of an eminently respectable summer hotel to myself,—though I don't choose to use them,—while you go tearing off to the hills and through the woods and bushes to a lover's trysting-place that overlooks a beautiful valley ; beautiful for only an hour, and with storm, desolation and ruin back of and over it. Don't you speak my name, Minnie Dorrance, nor mention my daughters in connection with anything so low as that,—you—you—miserable woman. You and that silly Mrs. Tendril and that loafer boy of yours had best be put in a bag and shaken up together, and you would not come out first either. You are a most impudent busybody, to tell such stories as you have about me to Mrs. Tendril and everybody in this house, and I shall give that Mrs. Tendril a piece of my mind, too, for her backbiting tongue."

"You'd better not. You'll get as good as you'll

send. She despises your Gertie, and her opinion of you—I've just had it—is no better than mine."

"She's a lying, gossiping little simpleton, and is married to a noodle. No sensible man would have her," retorted the now irate widow.

And so the war of words went on and on, each warding or striking with denials, recriminations, back-bitings, facebitings, much talk that bit or burned because it was true or because it was false. And the beginning of the end came, by way of vanquished Mrs. Tendril, who packed up her finery and with the Tendril "hubby" left the house; because—poor little dunce—she had won the hatred and brought down on her innocent head the vituperation of the other two ladies, in her effort to be agreeable to both. She had really only nodded, and said Amen to the one present, until accused of falsehood by both. The two came storming into her room together, in an agreeable alliance, to give little Mrs. Tendril as large pieces of their respective minds as they could angrily tear off and throw into her poor little frightened face. They succeeded in throwing her into a deluge of tears, and with her sobs still sounding in their ears, swept out of the room, joint victors, in a common warfare, and retired to Mrs. Craft's room to compliment each other on their courageous vanquishing of the poor little woman, and to declare that all the trouble in the house had been made by the gossiping tongue of "that little busybody."

Then Mrs. Craft brought out and displayed Gertie's new cream and heliotrope satin brocade tea-gown, over which Mrs. Dorrance went into ecstasies of delight. Mrs. Dorrance tripped to her room and returned with the great

five-pound box of French fruit candies which she said Mr. Wendt brought up from Mr. Dorrance, but which, in fact, Mr. Dorrance had never seen nor heard of. They nibbled and pecked and hopped about and chatted like two city sparrows, who had pulled one another about by the neck feathers in a gutter fight, and were now happily twittering affectionate gossip in the church ivy.

For the student of social phenomena each human life, in its individuality, has fascination. Even in their likeness to the beast, they are interesting. They, even, who employ charms to work evil ; the stare, rattle and sting of the charmer, the snake, as well as the tenderness of the dove, the strength of the lion, the exuberant joy of the lark.

Human lives, in infinite variety, cross each other and interweave in the great pattern which the Master's loom is weaving. It is not within the scope of human mind, nor possible for human eyes to see it all, or follow out the life of each, as in threads of white and scarlet and gold, the woof of lives is woven in, and nearly covers the warp of black ; working out the great, grand pattern, designed by Him, and guided by "the eye that never sleeps." We can only catch glimpses of "a figure" here and there, grand and beautiful ; thrilling us with thoughts of what *may* be, or gaze curiously into the dark depths of selfishness and error that lie behind or open between, in spaces of dark contrasting background. Of the little figure in the great pattern, which enters into this narrative, let us lift up some threads woven, or weaving in, and examine them. Philip Wendt is the son of a wealthy man, whose ostensible business is that of a stock-broker ; and a very small

portion of whose income is from commissions on the fleece of the lambs regularly shorn in Wall Street ; but whose greater revenue is from entailed property, left him by Mr. Philip Wendt's grandfather—consisting of lots and the tenements thereon, in the sixth ward of New York City. This so-called "Broker Wendt," is in fact a "Laird"; and his power of wealth-winning is not in a name or brain, but consists, in the quaint expression of old Bat McAuliffe, in "the power to take the mutton." Philip Jr., his only son, has been sent to all the schools, and has gained a superficial educational polish; enough to gild his coarse wings. He was allowed a more than generous annuity; taught by word and example that *notoriety* of almost any quality is life's desideratum. Wishing to revel in sense, and mount into public notice, he used his gilded wings to fly high and be seen. He is schooled in the sports of the field and the "green-table." He has been an attendant at races and pool-rooms. He is on "Hello" terms with the "demi-monde," and stakes money on the elections or on Sullivan. His father, the broker, is past middle age, rather idle, rather ignorant, very conceited, entirely self-satisfied, and besides being a small broker and a large landlord, is a small society man and a large politician, of the machine variety. Philip Wendt has had the life lessons and refining influences of such a father, and such associations. This broker-landlord-dandy-politician father, believed that if a thing was of any utility it must have been paid for. If it has been paid for—in his words—"that settles it." If the money be paid the goods should be delivered. Whether the goods be court-decisions, ballots, special legislation, or special privileges to bagnios, boodlers, corporations

or gamblers. Let there be "honor among thieves," he believed in that. That is, *his* party of thieves, not the other thieves, except, perhaps, when they came together to rub noses in a negotiation to jointly exploit the people, and raid the treasury. And his taxes? O, he could always "get them fixed all right." Why, his property was mostly "old tenements" and rickety "cheap buildings" anyhow, and "hadn't ought to be taxed like good houses and the fine stores in Sixth Avenue and Broadway, certainly not." Philip Wendt no more deserves to be condemned than pitied. He is simply the miserable fruit of a tree planted by our ancestry. A tree which has been, and continues to be, well watered and cared for by our government, although it is entirely a private and family tree. It draws its richness and glory, all its attractive, luxurious splendor, from the fertilizing filth and misery, of the gutter and tenement. Ah! Philip Wendt, under other conditions, reared on other food, *you* might have been a man; possibly might have been a noble and worthy man, but for this curse. In that you are not one, I will say, not *au revoir*, but, *go!* Yet it is not to the man, the brother, but to the character, the creature, and to the *cause* of its development, I would say, *go!* We need not study that thread of woof longer.

Another thread; Thomas Dorrance, jobber and wholesale dealer in hardware specialties, office in Chambers Street near Broadway, second floor. By persistent hard work and honorable dealing he has established a good reputation and a fairly profitable business. Various manufacturers in New England and Old England and elsewhere are making good things; goods, which Thomas Dorrance pumps industriously into his reser-

voir, where the little stores all over the country can send and obtain small quantities, to meet their little needs. Thomas Dorrance has this hardware tank tapped by a great number of mains and little pipes,—*i. e.* in railroads, boats, express lines, that make it easy for the Oshkosh retailer to open the faucet and let Dorrance's good things flow into his store just when he wants them. And the bill for this valuable service of storage and transportation,—for these valuable things, comes in once a month ; with the gas bill, water bill and their like. A working-man in Boonton, New Jersey, is shoveling ore into a wheelbarrow, and does not seem to know that he is producing nails ; but he is. Thomas Dorrance moves that same process another step farther. He shovels those nails into the retailer's bin, and some of us do not even notice, or know, that he is also a working-man, a laborer, producing nails ; but he is, just like the first man that took out the iron ore and placed it at the furnace mouth ; just like every other one who has refined and reformed it and moved it on, towards the end of production ; the ultimate purpose of production ;—which is to reach the location and meet the needs of the consumer,—to supply, so far as is possible, the insatiable demands of human need and desire.

Thomas Dorrance, laborer, *nobleman* ! Time was, when the reward for his good work was nearly equal to the added wealth his work gave to the world's stock. They lived very comfortably, those days, and acquired expensive tastes and habits. He is a generous man and cannot easily say no, where to say yes is to give present pleasure to others. Competition, a most beneficent natural law of business equations, is, through

unnatural interference, bereft of its good services, and has become thereby, harmful and almost ruinous to the business of Mr. Dorrance ; and to the profits of productive industries generally. Mrs. Minnie Dorrance's tastes are no less cultivated and exacting than heretofore. Her demands upon him have not decreased with his decreasing income. She don't know why her wants should not be satisfied in all particulars, as ever ; and Tom Dorrance is going to ruin, in his struggle to "keep up" his business ; in fruitless effort to make Minnie Dorrance and the children happy. He is drifting straight toward a pitiful failure, all around. If self-sacrifice is any proof of love,—and I believe it is about the only proof,—Thomas Dorrance is in love with his wife. Dress, extravagance, luxurious expenditures, very unfortunately for her peace of mind and safety of morals, is her only measure of distinction. The ways of society have taught this ; and she has learned her lesson. "Why cannot Thomas Dorrance spend money like the Wendts and the Lords ? He used to do so." Mrs. Dorrance is not happy, and is losing faith in, and patience with, her most devoted husband. We will lay down that thread in our history for the present, although in some other story by and by we may, for very pity, pick up the thread again, and seek the fundamental cause for the profitlessness of this needed industry, and the unhappiness of this family circle. For the present, to Thomas Dorrance, the hand of fellowship, heart of sympathy, and *au revoir*.

Another thread, the Windhams, Mr. G. P. Windham—a real estate agent, an honest and honorable man—finds landlords for tenants, secures tenants for landlords, collects rent, negotiates sales and purchases and re-

ceives a well-earned competence for such labor. His family, consisting of a wife and two daughters, emulate the Wendts, Lords, and Opolees, and are quite in line with the Crafts and the Dorrances, in their ambition to be known and noticed.

Mrs. Windham, with Grace and Laura, came promptly to take the rooms made vacant by the departure of the Tendrils, and promptly fell into the line of parade, delighted to find Rush House and Sconset Road more popular and more patronized even than the previous year. She immediately wrote to Windham, because she wanted to let him know of their safe arrival, because she loved him and wanted to tell him of the improvements and of their comfortable establishment, because she wanted to picture to him in a delicate way, the opportunity to raise her social banner and to call round them a following, and because she wanted to just mindfully and affectionately tap his pocket-book with her jeweled fingers. He replied :

“ OFFICE OF WINDHAM & WOOD.

“ Real Estate and Insurance.

“ Brooklyn, N. Y.

“ DEAR ANNA,

“ You may need more money. I enclose draft for seventy-five dollars. Can get it cashed at Scarborough Bank. I forgot to buy the canvas shoes for the girls yesterday. Buy them up there. Tell the girls to wear their wide hats and blue flannel tramping suits, and to live outdoors—in the woods,—on the hills; climb fences and ‘rough it.’ I am not especially delighted to learn of the ‘changes’ up there; that Sconset Road is getting lively; a thoroughfare ‘almost’ like Clinton Avenue, and to hear of the ‘people who dress’ gorgeously, etc., etc. We get enough of that at home, here. My idea of a proper ‘outing’ is simplicity, quiet and release from all such exactations; a pleasant ‘at home’ with Nature, in her sweet, every-day dress of woods and weeds and wild flowers,—fields, and little birds that sing,

and do not, like city sparrows, divide their time between pecking at filth in the highway and quarreling gossip in the window slats, trying to peck one another's clothes to pieces. I get tired of such unworthy battles for supremacy in dress and parade and triumph of narrowness, and am glad to be freed, and quiet once or twice in a while. But there be some who like the 'fol de rol.' However I should not, nor do I, expect everybody to be of my way of thinking or acting. And if one has to be 'in it,' patience, in such an outing must be an excellent and necessary companion, if we would enjoy such life. To be able to really enjoy it must be quite a virtue. I mean, to really enjoy 'Vanity's Fair,'—where over-anxious mothers bring out their feminine wares, curried and groomed, trot them up and down the exhibition track to teach them the pace, or if, perchance, a possible purchaser comes that way, make them walk gingerly, dance, prance, step high and cheat the truth of all its sweetness.

"I like natural people, *real* people, better than 'make-ups,' who as last resort are, I fear, the very worst of pick-ups that mortal man or woman can select. Perhaps it is quite as well not to pick them up and try to carry them at all, they fall again so easily. However, if such an outing does not happen to amuse me, what right have I to ask or wish your acquiescence? What right have I to say when you may laugh, or where? I ought to be glad you can find place for laughter anywhere; and I am. 'So there.' I will laugh with you. For if to me it is neither tragic nor melodramatic, its absurdity is magnificent comedy; and I laugh too, until the tears come into my eyes and my breath is gone; laugh earnestly and merrily.

"Affectionately, your husband,

"G. P. WINDHAM."

Doubtless Mr. Windham felt better for all that spilling over of his unasked opinions, and Mrs. Windham felt better for the check. But "Vanity's Fair" was continued "at the same old stand," for many weeks more. And pride had its victories and its falls at Sconset and Scarborough. They who could not "outdo" were hurt and they who did "outdo" were proud. It is not easy to determine—out of the riot of evil consequences —whether victor or victim is to be envied. Indeed

whether in the end both are not victims. Other actors came onto the Sconset stage. The play went on with new characters but much the same action and lines, yet with the new actors, the vanity show was continuously interesting and funny, though hardly profitable.

Thetty received a letter from John, and that he might not burden her with his pain and disappointments he simply wrote that he had not been as successful as he could have wished in his first two weeks' effort, but that he was continuously cheered by the memory of that vision, of the girl at the gate who looked out toward him ever and sent love in the look, etc., etc.

Etta Foyle's "two weeks off" came to an end all too soon. With garnered trophies of the fields and woods to be tastefully strewn about the little room of the Brooklyn flat, and with as many kisses and tears on the part of Thetty, Maggie and Mother Vick as if she were a sister and daughter leaving the home nest, Etta Foyle returned to the flat and the shop, to begin another year, which had at its termination the possible goal of another taste of Paradise on the Sconset farm.

CHAPTER XII.

PARTISANS AND MUGWUMPS.

JOHN HARDHAND, Farmer John, had passed through an entirely new and peculiar experience during the time he had spent in the great city. But this last experience, this riot of thought, this mixing of the incongruous, this chaotic unfitness of visible facts produced by Thetty's double, so disturbed him, so filled him with disquiet, that if he had been of the other sex, he would doubtless have been called hysterical. He was afraid to pause long at the Thirteenth Street corner of Fourth Avenue, lest "she" might come up that way. He sauntered leisurely down the Avenue toward his hotel home. When he had reached Ninth Street, Cooper Union, and was passing the entrance to the public hall, he saw posted on the bulletin in great black letters on yellow ground, an announcement of some sort. From his habit of listlessly staring at posters, he paused before it, and gazed dreamily at it. No thought or care possessed his mind as to the announcement printed there. He knew it was a great poster, knew it had no pictures upon it; only that. But it was sufficient excuse to stop the weary tramp, for a moment, and gaze at it or pretend to gaze, while he only the more deeply *dreamed*. When the motion of his limbs stopped, it left his whole mind to dreams. After gazing at the poster for a full minute, without comprehending a line, or having any definite

thought of it, he was aroused to an outward sense of his surroundings by the conversation of two men standing immediately behind him, who were commenting on the posted announcement.

"Oh, bosh!" said one, "the whole thing is a fake got up by a lot of cranks just to fool and exploit the workingmen, and to make a living for a lot of crazy-headed labor agitators."

"Now, Wilmot," said the other, "why do you say that? Have you ever heard this speaker? Do you know these people to be crazy cranks? Or has somebody *told* you so? Do you personally, Jim, know anything about them?—Jim Wilmot, I'm getting tired of swallowing and swearing by the religion and philosophy and politics of 'the man that told me so.' I've got enough of that sort of thing, and I'm going to do a little of the *thinking for myself*. I am not satisfied that an assertion is true 'because I have seen the man that told me so.' And, in consequence, I am finding out that three times out of five, 'the man that told me so' was a blasted liar. He didn't know anything about it, and talked as he heard other fools chatter, or else he did know and intentionally lied. He was looking out for his own bread and butter. He knew, or thought he knew, where the butter lay, and so long as I would believe it, because 'he told me so' a lie was just as useful to him as the truth, or was more so, if it would pass the butter plate over my head to him."

John was awake now; that language had in it the bitterness of wronged manhood. He seemed to hear in it, for the first time in his life, the far away, low rumbling thunder of a social storm. He was interested in the poster now, and read the great headlines:

"IS NOT GOD THE FATHER OF US ALL? ARE WE NOT THEN
BROTHERS?"

He read every line of the bulletin carefully. It announced regular weekly meetings in the main hall of Cooper Union, and addresses by one or more of several well-known students of the social problems. An eminent Christian man and teacher was to speak this evening. John's mind was confused as to what possible relation could be claimed to exist between the fatherliness of God and the landless, the homeless, the tramp and the outcast, in their relation to *human laws*. "I'll walk up here after supper," thought John.—"'Admission is free!—' yes, and come in and hear what 'this crank' has to say." Then, Farmer John mentally reviewed the popular measure of men and society, which, more is the pity—was also his measure of them, thus,—"*selfishness* is the inspiration and rule of action of all mankind. When men are no longer selfish, then, the Millennium!"

"Nineteen hundred years of Christian civilization has not removed nor perceptibly abated human selfishness; nor yet can it, though it may somewhat modify its more barbarous expression—boldly worn in the age of heedless ignorance,—and give to it a more smooth and graceful presence in the age of culture."

"But," thought John, "it is at least amusing, though profitless, to listen to well-meaning people who have less than the usual amount of selfishness and greed, who seemingly ignore the inevitable law of selfishness, and estimate how life may be made better and happier, with as much confidence and assurance, as if it really could be made better." To John in his present state, even a

dream, however impossible of realization, was a diversion from the pain of living, and he determined to come and listen to the amusing chatter of this theoriser upon the premise of millennial virtue and morality.

Now that he had that definite purpose, the purpose of being amused, he started rapidly and reached Earle's Hotel in an incredibly short time; brushed himself up, ate his supper, looked over the papers in the reading-room and then sauntered leisurely up to Cooper Union. He was early, and had a half-hour to wait before the doors would be opened. A dozen or more persons were already waiting at the Third Avenue entrance, and the number gradually increased. Conversation was going on all about him. There was a kindly tone of good-nature pervading the assemblage, which was both novel and agreeable. John became an interested listener. He discovered persons in earnest conversation who were evidently entire strangers to each other. They talked freely, yet were tolerant of each other's different views. He heard one say to another, "May I ask your name, friend?" The other gave it promptly, together with his address and such general information as to his position and vocation as would give a conception of the environment that had influenced his judgment. It is easy to be tolerant when we are acquainted with *circumstances* that have affected the conclusions of those who widely differ from us. The conditions attending this assemblage, as well as the conduct and purpose of the individuals composing it, were alike interesting and novel. John soliloquized, "why, after all, should men be afraid of each other?" And he was not startled nor surprised when a gentleman standing near said to him with unaffected familiarity,

"Friend, it isn't pleasant, to be obliged to wait here so long, is it?" And the stranger continued, "But if the crowd back of us doesn't increase so as to threaten life or limb by the press, I think we shall be repaid for all our discomfort, after we get inside."

To which John replied—after the Yankee fashion—with a question—"Is the speaker really so very interesting and *amusing?*"

The gentleman looked curiously at Farmer John, and then as if he had solved the mystery, remarked, "O, perhaps you have never heard him?"

John had, heretofore, heard some contemptuous gossip about this particular public speaker. And now he recalled the rebuke that Jim Wilmot had deserved, and which had been administered to him, before the bulletin board. John himself felt not a little ashamed of having echoed the uncertain and harmful vaporings of "the man that told me so." So he answered the gentleman very respectfully, "No, sir. I have not had the pleasure."

"Ah, very well; I think you will not regret coming to hear him."

"What supports these fellows?" asked John. "And how do they make these free meetings pay? Brilliant and capable orators are not likely to employ their talents without some personal reward. A great hall and lights and ushers and all those things cost money. What pays for it all?"

"O," said the stranger, "they take up a voluntary contribution to pay the hall expenses and for printing, but the speakers take no pay."

"What is the subject discussed? What is the object of it all? What are they aiming at?"

"The serious problem of living : how to live," answered the stranger friend. "We are discussing the 'Social problem' and how to solve it through political means ; political economy, the science of government."

"Ah, ha," said John, and he laughed a little, though quite respectfully, "I understand ; politics, politics ! Now I understand where the speakers and promoters of these free meetings look for the reward of their 'labors'. While that sort of thing may occasionally turn out a profit to the leader, the captain, I have failed to see that it helps the fellow much who carries the torch and wades in the mud ; that's me, and the other highprivates."

Reader, pardon the diversion, but it is due to Farmer John, that I relieve him from the appearance of dogmatism, by explaining the cause for his suspicious regard of anything political. At the moment John made that charge of pettiness and self-seeking as the impelling motive of these earnest students of political economy, there arose very distinctly to his memory, recollections of how, year after year, he had trudged about, through rain and mud, with the other farmer boys and men carrying a smoking, ill-smelling, grease-dripping torch, wearing a fantastic oil-cloth cape, following a rub-a-dub drum and a fife or worse—a country brass band—and banners or transparencies that made a puny and saddening effort to ridicule some other party's convictions, or made equally absurd though specious promises of glory and enrichment, for each and "every American citizen ;" if its own policy be accepted, and with always the most grandiloquent bow in salute to "the American farmer" and a pledge to continuously maintain the present "dignity, comfort and independence of the

American workingmen." He remembered how Lemuel E. Havitt had been a sort of self-constituted political leader ; the captain of their Sconset political company. He remembered that "our side won the battle" and that "our man got in" and that Lem had only the *glory* for his reward year after year, until at last he got mad and swore "he was not going to organize the Sconset Phalanx again unless they give him a show." and then, a delegate from the county committee came to Lemuel E. Havitt with the statement that they "had the promise of the State Central Committee, that if their congressman 'got elected' he had promised to see that Lem should be 'fixed all right' next year, if he would only continue *this* year his patriotic and magnificent services to 'the Party,' his country and the cause of American freedom, as he had so splendidly done in the past. The Nation expected this State to decide the victory for the rights of the American farmer. The eyes of this State were upon dear faithful old Sconset, and looked to her to roll up her old-time majority for the Party ; and Lemuel E. Havitt, the victorious leader in so many battles, they trusted without fear of failure, as one tried and true." That fed Lemuel's vanity, aroused his patriotism, quieted his discontent, and settled the matter.

Lem "went in again and beat the other fellows all hollow." But he did not get the nomination for Assemblyman the next year ; two years later he did, however, secure for himself an appointed office, that of inspector and appraiser of lumber, in the "custom house service" at New York.

About that time in John's political experience, he had paused for a moment's thoughtful consideration. He

had looked over his best clothing ; what he called his "Sunday-clothes." These were the clothes that in his patriotic zeal he had worn to march about in, regardless of consequences. The trousers were mud-stained, fringed a little at the bottom, bagged immensely at the knees, and the whole suit was shrunk and drawn out of shape by its frequent wetting. He figured up the proceeds of his political "party work," and if he had written it on paper, as it was written into his memory, it would have read thus : "If we had failed, I would know why I am so badly off. But 'my side carried the day' nearly every time ; and has had unhindered opportunity to do what they promised to do for the American farmer and the American workingman. I am in my own person both workingman and farmer. They have *not* done as they promised to do. I am not fattening on their unkept promises.

"They have said to us, elect so and so. 'He will push forward policy, such and such, which is the practical application of a great cardinal principle of our glorious party ; then the wheels of manufacture will hum with ceaseless activity ; an unprecedented demand will arise for the products of the farm ; our agricultural interests will be so advanced that prices and profits will place the American farmer at the very head of his vocation ; a model for the world of that prosperity and thrift which is only possible in this glorious and free Republic where all are free, and each has equal opportunity with every other citizen.'"

"The money which is now held back from circulation and is stored away—for lack of confidence in the policy of 'the other fellows' and the fear that they may 'get in'—will then flow out freely through the whole

range of industries. Prosperity will be restored so soon as 'level-headed' business men are assured that *our* party, the party in which even its enemies have financial confidence, is at the rudder of the ship of State. We will place the people of the entire foreign world in a position of dependence upon us, by making ourselves independent of them. Our ships will cover the seas, laden with *out-going* products of America, that the world *must have*. To all of which talk and tune the puppets jump about, and ecstatically kick, while the ventriloquist behind the curtain puts into their mouths this song: 'And the foreigner shall not send any goods, any good things, back to us, and—and—thus we shall *prosper*.'

"Very well, or perhaps very ill, my party won the fight; our man was elected. Our system and policy was tried. Lem went into the custom-house and in the second year of his service was dismissed for being so extremely careless as to be caught taking bribes. It happened that the captain of a schooner engaged in the lumber trade had, while intoxicated, betrayed Lem's confidence in him. He had paid Lem twenty-five dollars to undervalue his cargo of lumber, and the drunken idiot in stupid confidence informed another fellow how he had 'worked his cargo through, almost duty free.' The other person belonged to the political party opposed to ours. He made complaint, secured the arrest of both Lem and the captain, and Lem was dismissed in disgrace. But the party leaders have promised to 'fix Lem all right' if he will continue doing good honest partisan work up at Sconset. Lemuel is a good political worker. They tell me, he is 'whooping it up,' at Sconset this year, and figuring for the

Assembly. It may be that he will be elected. I should not be surprised at it. Political cunning has often been more efficient for the office-seeker than either wisdom or honor. ‘A fool for luck!’

“And what now about the manufacturers, who were going ‘to make work’ for American workingmen? The manufacturers, who were going to ‘give work’ to the landless, the helpless, the unemployed American workingmen? There was a *great* silk mill started down at Scarborough, but shortly after two struggling *little* silk mills at Neponset went down as the big mill at Scarborough went up and began operation. They started a great cracker bakery down there, too. It belongs to the Combination, ‘The United States Cracker Baking Company.’ They have many great bakeries in different cities throughout the country; produce crackers with machinery and cheap help. The other political party declared that crackers would be dearer if our party came into power, but they are not any dearer than before,—about the same.—But there are no more men at work, there is no more money going around, and what there is, is harder to get—at least it is harder for us high-privates in the army of producers. Wages are lower and opportunities for employment more scarce; confound their statistics to the contrary. Let twenty of them start out with me and try the man market. There are no more crackers baked nor eaten; there are less. And there are not, all told, so many bakers making crackers. But ‘The Baking Company,’ I am told, is ‘making money hand over fist.’ They keep it in their fists, too, and hand very little of it over to bakers. As there are only a very few members of ‘The Baking Company,’ a great number of

cracker bakers and a still greater number who are neither members of The Company nor bakers, The Baking Company counts for very little in making a market for farm products; and farmers are obliged to depend upon that great majority, the dependent people of small means. It is *their ability to buy* that makes the market demand and determines the market price for our products—the price both to themselves and to the wealthy.

“ ‘Our system’ was tried, our promise had its opportunity of fulfillment, yet the sea is not covered with American merchant ships; indeed, no American merchant ships cross the sea, laden or empty, in this anno Domini 1890. But the government is going to hire some ships to steam across the seas, if our party secures control again, perhaps even before that event.

“ It is said that it does not pay to run American ships. If, however, the ship-owners will help to elect ‘our man’ the government will ‘fix that all right’; did they not ‘fix’ Lem Havitt all right? They are going to pay a part of the expense of running the ship-owners’ ships. Why in the name of ‘American equality’ don’t the government pay a part of *my* running expenses? I thought we had all equal rights to the benefits of government in this land of the free. Equality, indeed! Free indeed! Free to starve, if some one more favored cannot or will not give me an opportunity and permission to live.”

John had a distinct recollection at this moment of having once talked in this unorthodox fashion to a political compatriot, and the man, astonished at his incredulity, had said to him, with all appropriate rhetor-

ical flourish and with that conception of the situation peculiar to the partisan politician : "Here, here, John Hardhand, hold on ; h-o-l-d o-n. You are getting in over your depth. Do you doubt that the great and good statesmen of your own party know more about politics than you do ? Think of the founders of our party, think of the great things our party has accomplished. What do you know about politics, anyway ? You haven't the time to study out political problems. Let politicians attend to the management of politics. Leave such matters to those who know how. You should always trust your tried and true political party. Your father did, and his father did. Think you know more'n your father, hey ? Gett'n smart. Don't go back on your party and be a turncoat."

"Ah yes," John had replied, "the party, that is, the politicians, are always glad to trust their policy to the wise, conservative judgment of the American people ; so long as the American people permit the politicians to determine 'the policy ;' so long as the people give assent to the insolent claim, that 'the party,'—that is, the politicians—know better what the people want, than the people themselves."

And to this his political associate retorted reprovingly : "You come of a solid New England ancestry, John Hardhand. Your father and your grandfather knew what they were about. You stick to your party ; whether you are a democrat or a republican, be true to your party. If you go to fooling around, and thinking over these things yourself, the first you know, you will become a mugwump. And of all contemptible things in this world, the most contemptible of all the political cranks is a mugwump. Any good, 'true dem-

ocrat' or good 'true republican' will tell you that. Just read any of the party newspapers and see how they despise a mugwump."

"Now that is significant," thought John, "these politicians that know all about politics, who are in the 'politic business' and all these great party newspapers that are prospering by catering to the follies of a party-following people, do so hate and despise, and are so much disturbed by a mugwump, and afraid of mugwumpery, that it forces me to believe there is something selfish about their malignity. I never saw a man yet who had not some good in him, and these party men paint the mugwump all bad. I would like to know just what a mugwump is. Papers and politicians have given as many definitions of him as you can shake a stick at, and all bad. One says : 'The mugwump is a "sore-head," disappointed because he cannot get an office.' Very well then, nine-tenths of the politicians, yes, all but those in office, are mugwumps ; so that cannot be a correct definition. Another says : 'A mugwump—he's a conceited fellow, with some "fool ideas," impracticable and utopian, that he wants to force into practical politics. He is *the fool in politics.*'" Then John recalled names and memories of some of the men whom party papers and orators had politically outlawed as mugwumps ; some of the fools. And indeed it included the names of men who had stood highest in national and party respect. Another definition : "The mugwump, not satisfied with the dictum of his party (the politicians), is a man who has opinions of his own, and expresses them, in defiance of the oft-repeated warning that it will hurt the party."

"There, that's it," thought John, "my Party insists

upon my believing that I am prosperous, even though I were being robbed. Wants me to believe—at least, while my party is at the helm—that this is the best possible government. Wants me to believe that farmers are getting rich; that there is work for all, wealth for all, luxury for all, who are not lazy and unwilling to reach out their hands. That there is a free and waiting chance for all who want it, and try. That every American citizen unless he is ‘too lazy to work’ is guaranteed at least a good ‘American home,’ a luxurious support for his family, a safe surplus for a happy and contented old age, and that all American citizens are guaranteed exact equality of opportunity to accomplish those good results. Parties and papers may spout that ridiculous absurdity as much as they please,—I, John Hardhand, know from my own anxious and alarmed observation,—know out of my own hard practical experience, that all that stuff is a political party lie. And when a man or a party lies, they have an object in lying; and it is not often a worthy object. At my first opportunity I am going to learn, if possible, in what the particular Mugwump differs from the orthodox ‘practical politician.’”

The stranger who had called John Hardhand, “friend,” and had so suddenly aroused all these thoughts and memories in his mind, was chatting now with another man who seemed to be his companion; and John came out of his day-dream diversion, into a sense of things about him,—a sense of the general conversation; a cheerful sort of hope-inspired chatter, a spirit of good humor pervading the assemblage. But over all there seemed to abide an earnest seriousness that excluded the frivolous.

The writer of this little "history of plain folks" can imagine Franklin, the Adamses, Washington, Jefferson, and their compatriots, cheerfully, good-humoredly at work on the keel and hull of a new and better ship of State; and the cheerfulness of the hope of human betterment that encouraged them. But he cannot conceive of anything simply amusing and frivolous, in either their talk or their work, as they studied the wreckage of other governments, contemplated the sacred and "inalienable rights of man," studied the just principles and just limitations of the powers of government in its relation to the sacred rights of the individual. Men, honestly, earnestly, seeking to better the condition of their fellow-men, unselfishly desiring to make life for all men worthier, nobler, and happier, may be cheerful, and will be so, but they cannot be trifling and frivolous at their work. Yet so long as "party service" continues to be the price of official selection and placement, there will be skylarking in the lobby, and frivolous laughter-making nonsense on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. And votes of censure will prevail for the minority members who shall have the boldness to criticise silliness. This humiliation will surely continue so long as in payment for having made partisan thunder, I. M. Out simply vacates to make place for the Lem E. Haveits.

Ah, at last, the door of entrance was thrown open, and into the great Cooper Union Hall rushed the crowd of men, yes, and women too, who, beginning to think for themselves, are anxious to hear "the other side," all sides, keenly sensing the injustice of social conditions. Yes, the door to a higher civilization is being thrown open, in this last decade of the nineteenth century. The

party-serving yokes of prejudice and dogmatism are being cast off. Think your thought and say your say, and seek to know righteousness and truth wherever they may be found. Walk in, gentlemen, the door is open.

CHAPTER XIII.

A COOPER-UNION MEETING.

EVERY seat of the great Cooper Union Hall was filled. John Hardhand was near the center aisle, and only four or five seats from the front. There were seated on the platform, at the right and left of the speaker's table, thirty or forty persons, ladies and gentlemen, many of whom had the appearance of intellectual distinction.

John questioned the gentleman sitting next him about the frequency of these meetings ; if they were usually so well attended. He learned that they were, and that frequently many were turned away for lack of seating-room. John also learned that the man with whom he conversed was born at Scarborough, and came to New York to live when but a little boy. Some of his family still lived there. John knew of them. The name was Wilson.

"Mr. Wilson," said John, "will you kindly inform me about the people sitting on the platform? Who is that gentleman, slightly bald and a little gray, at the left, there?"

"That," replied Mr. Wilson, mentioning the gentleman's name, "is a son of the great man whose fame you doubtless recall as the foremost opponent of human slavery, before and during the late war. And the gentleman sitting next him is a professor in one of our New England colleges."

"Who is 'the priest all shaven and shorn,' sitting in his long robes?" asked John, with just a little touch of contempt in the tone of his inquiry.

"He is a clergyman," Mr. Wilson replied; "son of a distinguished bishop of the Episcopal Church; and is a 'brother' in the 'Order of The Iron Cross.' Without any financial reward,—like the Nazarene Carpenter,—he is wholly devoting his talents and his life to the service of the poor; living in their midst, educating, encouraging, uplifting, *helping* them. He is much among people whose ignorant religious tendencies, like that of the ancient Jews, are first inspired by exterior forms; and with the religious garb, he can and does reach and inspire with the sweetness of a Christian spirit, very many whom without the ceremonial dress he could not reach at all. He really is *giving himself* for his 'neighbor.' "

The contemptuous lines all smoothed out of John's face, and he said, "Bless him;—but I do so dislike the *robes* of religion."

"Yes,—no doubt," replied Mr. Wilson; "'t is a very common prejudice. A prejudice aroused by the fact that priestly robes so often cover an unchristian spirit and life. It isn't the robes that are wrong and deserving of contempt, it is the unworthiness which they sometimes cover. He wears these robes as worthy means of helping in the work of doing good. Our prejudices harm our judgment, always. I know mine harm me."

"Who is that short, compactly-built, hearty-looking little fellow, with the full beard and bald head,—away back at the rear, on the second row of chairs?" asked John

"That," replied Wilson, "is the author of a most instructive and interesting book on political economy. He has made a great commotion among the followers of old follies, and a great many enemies among the manipulators of political machines. With the exception of one other man—Mr. Gladstone—this little man is perhaps the most widely-known person in the world to-day. He has won the love of his friends, the admiration of the world, and the respect of those who hate his teachings ; because of his intellectual honesty and fearlessness."

John continued his inquiries, and gained much desired information. There were on the platform, ministers and priests, Christian teachers of world-wide renown ; a Jewish rabbi, a college president, scientists and artists, an eminent poet, representatives of the highest literary talent, a judge of the Superior Court, two congressmen, several ladies prominent in literary circles, and a real live member of the British Parliament. And these fools were doubtless mugwumps,—for they certainly had opinions of their own.

A round-faced, happy-looking man, wearing glasses, arose, and stepping to the desk, rapped for order. He was lustily cheered, and some time was joyously spent in giving him welcome. At last he secured order. As the chairman of the meeting, he made a few introductory remarks, and proceeded to introduce "the speaker of the evening," who came forward from a seat at the rear of the platform. John was startled by the enthusiasm of the cheering that greeted the speaker's appearance. He was a large and finely-proportioned man, with a fine head, a plump, ruddy, clean-shaven face, and dark brown, almost black, hair. The

cheering arose again and again. Smiling, he bowed to the sea of faces, and as he raised his hand, with open palm toward the audience, the acclamations ceased. Quiet instantly fell over all the house ;—a perfect hush. He had no notes, nor did he seem to need them ; for filled with rush of thoughts, too full and rapid-flowing for utterance, he seemed to hold them in, and only guide them. His voice was full and resonant. He spoke in a conversational manner. He moistened his lips from the glass of water on the stand beside him and beginning his speech, said :

“ Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen : It but ill becomes one standing in all the weakness of this human life, to question the decrees of the providence of the Creative Mind, or to question the inalienable laws that by the same Creator have been ordained for the best use of His material gifts to the children of men. We find ourselves in this human state, bound to the earth by the necessities which make its use the means of existence, and its *best* use the means of our highest material and spiritual perfection. ‘The heaven of heavens, is the Lord’s ; but the Earth, He hath given unto the children of men.’ To attribute to luck or fate or Providence, conditions that are ; to thus mislead and befool that human judgment,—which, if unjust, should be at least intelligent—to call the ways we mortals go, *God’s ways*, and say of them, ‘it is divinely intended so, or it would not be,’ is a way to ruin, but not a way to righteousness. Our Father’s ‘ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace.’ ”

“ With reverent submission to the will of the Creator, man acknowledged from the beginning, that the visible works of God, all

wondrous in their beauty, in their number, in their order, in their proportions, were but the school into which the Father had led his well-beloved child ; that learning to read aright the handwriting upon the rocks, the sea, the sand and even upon the stars of Heaven he might come to know the beneficence and beauty of natural laws and in man's just and joyful use of that knowledge his heart shall sing, and 'God's will be joyfully done on earth even as it is in heaven.' "

" Man felt, man knew, that he could well spurn the earth, because he was the child of the king ; that the Father desired that he should earn the blessed reward of perfect favor and perfect love by working out his destiny. And so that this world was not only a school in which man might learn to read rightly the Father's will that is written in unmistakable characters upon all His works, but also a workshop, into which the wise Father led His child, that by the proper, the reasonable, the proportionate exercise of all his faculties he might make out of the raw materials that God has placed in such abundance around him, things new and strange. And thus proclaim, also, in some measure, his likeness to the King, his Father, by exercising in some sense the creative faculty. God gave to man, then, this power to know the truth, to discover the laws of nature, and from the laws of nature to rise to the knowledge of nature's God ; to admire and to love all that is good in God's visible works."

With such philosophy of the economics of nature, the orator spoke on for an hour, cheered warmly, enthusiastically, at those sallies of poetical truth which swept like the awakening melody of a song in the night over the aroused sympathies of men hungering for brotherly fraternity, but forced to fight their brothers in "the battle of life." They were constant in their attention, and John marveled at the earnest kindliness, that smoothed out the lines of anxious care, and wrote instead on every face the joy of hope. The speaker referred instructively to the existing social antagonisms. He pointed out the mistakes of men which so long as they are perpetuated, make strife and struggle a ne-

cessity of life. He pointed, also, from the way of pain to the way of peace. He called the attention of his audience to the specific mistakes in human laws, that had placed brothers at enmity, and embittered life. He stated clearly the truth of the way to correct human laws so as to make it profitable in this human life to be just and to do unto others as we would wish others to do unto us. He painted with words that burned the color into the memories of men an unmistakable picture of the joy of earthly living, in the midst of a kindly, brotherly fraternity, easily made possible and actual and materially profitable, by "a very simple change in human laws" which would reverse the cause for enmity, and make injustice and willing idleness unprofitable. He pointed to the one only barrier, the indifference of ignorance, and to the one reforming force, intelligent education. He urged as the duty of each who had caught sight of the truth, whose heart had been fired with the fullness of its promise, to carry the torch to other hearts, and spread the light. He likened it to a crusade.

"It was the badge of the cross of Christ, the ensign of the holy war, that gave to all our modern languages the word 'crusade.' It need be no material emblem, but it stands for the acceptance by men and women, by whomsoever will hear the call that invites them, as a symbol of noble purpose. It invites them to forget themselves, to set aside their wretched strifes, to utterly renounce the injustice in which they have been engaged, and to take on a new enthusiasm of humanity in believing, working, battling, suffering, and if need be dying for the right. He who 'spake as never man spake before' or since, in homely accents, and in simple parables taught the poor and lowly and oppressed, the comforting doctrine, so full of truth and light, of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

The speaker referred also with genuine sadness, to

the social disturbances, strikes, riots, lockouts, as the blows at random, of ignorance made mad with injustice and oppression, striking out wildly in defense or in revenge. "The trod worm turning." A most portentous promise of what will come, if we seek not and follow not the peaceful way. He said :

" It is not my purpose, my intent, my thought, to justify the excesses of nihilists or socialists or dynamiters, yet in the heart of these supposed nihilists, anarchists, dynamiters, in spite of their hatred of so much that is good, in spite of a spirit that at times seems so destructive, so subversive and so absolutely atheistic, there is for all that, more of the essence of religion in them, than in many of those who sit in the foremost places in the synagogue and thank God they are not as other men are.' The very rage, the very fury, the very apparent satanic hatred of the nihilist and the dynamiter in his horrible and misguided methods is nevertheless a magnificent tribute to the spiritual and better part of man, the God-given instinctive *hunger for justice*.

" Take away injustice, preach to the dynamiter, the extreme socialist, the nihilist and the anarchist, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Teach him that the wrongs he suffers, the crimes that so outrage him, that make him so bitter against the existing order of things, are not the result of the law of God, but are the necessary penalty, the self-inflicted, natural penalty of the violation of God's laws, and he ceases to be the dynamiter. (Applause.) He ceases to be the atheist. (Applause.) He takes on a reverent and loving spirit. His sense of justice is satisfied, and he is the more willing to work by peaceful, lawful, constitutional means, for the righting of the wrongs, for the teaching of the gospel of truth, until a majority of the voters in a government by the people, shall recognize the wisdom and the profitableness of justice, and so re-write the laws of men as to align them with the right, God-ordained, natural law, of absolute and equal justice among all men."*

* The quotations in small type, are from the stenographic report of a speech which the author heard from the lips of a man he has learned to love and respect, and whom he takes this opportunity to thank for the utterances quoted, and for many good seeds sown in the field of human betterment.

A most perfect orator! His every word and gesture expressed such intense earnestness, that he promptly won the sympathy and moved the hearts of his audience. Responsive cheering seemed an irresistible temptation and the audience frequently obliged him to hesitate for a moment, awaiting the restoration of silence. There would seem to have gathered in his mind during the pause even greater intensity of thought and conviction, which burst out in greater power of language and rang with the cheering prophecy of a better day, or burned as did the burning letters of promised doom on the palace walls of the Babylonish king, with baleful prophecy, if we refused to seek and follow the sure and peaceful way, "a way out" from that unbrotherly isolation and antagonism, that now, so shapes the course of men; that unbrotherly strife with which all the race is so weary and disgusted, except perhaps a few of the financially most cunning and successful. His audience found here rest, respite, and a clear and wholesome breath of a purer air. This, from the atmosphere of a reasonable *hope* of the dawning of better conditions.

They gained a new and clearer comprehension of "the Father's provision," not for one only, or some only, but for all His children. They saw for the first time their real likeness unto God, in His gift to them, of creative power, in a certain sense. A power delegated to man; the reasonable power to use the materials and opportunities and forces of the earth, and produce; create for himself, things new and needful, comforting and joyous. Thus came to the mind of this audience, an awakened and clearer thought of His fatherliness, insomuch that when the speaker com-

menced to repeat the prayer of the Nazarene Carpenter, "Our Father," his voice was drowned in the great Amen of cheers that arose from the very hearts of men, long lost to all interest in the spiritless formalisms, and frequent inconsistencies, of the religion of the churches.

Our Father! The All-Father! Then it is not He—but we—have wrought the misery and pain with which we groan. Mistakenly, heedlessly, perversely, we have neglected his gifts, made hideous and unlike, our likeness to Him. Have robbed most men of their opportunity to "work out" with the use of mind and matter, their own salvation and elevation into a more complete intellectual and moral "likeness" resuming the original "likeness." He is our *Father*; and the doubting heart is reassured, its hope renewed, and He is the *All-father*; so the thought and fact of the universal brotherhood springs up, to sweep away with gentle hand the bitterness of strife, and to win our pity, where we cannot yield our fullest love. And now we see, or begin to see, the pettiness of our childish quarrels and strifes about "the toys" and "biggest boys," and all such trifle. We are brothers and He is the Father of us all. We may well pity our brothers and sisters and ourselves. Spoiled children of social mal-environment, who vaunt ourselves, disparage our brothers and strut and scratch and tyrannize. "My father is richer than yours. My family is older than yours. I am more cultured than you. We own more of the earth than you." To all of which the greater number of brothers, children of the one Father, the "poorer," the humbler, the more ignorant, the landless, answer back with frowns or blows, or in pouting sulks and dirty swollen

tear-stained eyes, "You don't play fair. Just wait till I get the chance, I'll get the best of you."

And, reader, have you never noticed among little children and children older grown as well, how adroitly the greedy grabber of goodies, withholds justice, by treating bold beggary with contempt, and then also, treating silent suffering as equally unworthy? He of the House of Have, says to his brother of the House of Need, as little children sometimes do, "You shan't have none now, just 'cause you asked." And to another who only looks wistfully, when goodies are in sight, and pleads afterwards, "Well, *I* did not ask," the holder of the whole confection box says, "What ain't worth asking for ain't worth having. If you wanted it much you'd have asked for it."

Working, wealth-making men, ask for a larger part of the product, and get for answer, "No, you can't run our business, now, we *won't* give you more." They threaten and strike; "No, indeed, now, you shan't have *any*." "Lock them out." They do *not* ask, and the greedy holder of the bon-bon box fills the press with chatter of bragadocio about "the thousands of Americans to whom I '*give work*' are so well contented and satisfied with what I give them that they don't even ask for more. I think I am giving them too much of the product." And he soon feels that he is marvelously generous and ought to look out for himself a little more, and generally does do so, by giving notice of a ten per cent. reduction of wages. All this among the brothers;—children of our Father; equal claimants upon His bounty. With equal rights to his gifts, and no right to take or withhold from any brother the common gifts from our Father to all His

children, nor to exact price or humiliation from another brother, for our consent to his use of the Father's gifts. John Hardhand was catching a glimpse of a way of escape from the social wrangle; as much as his half-opened eyes could see.

The way and the coming day of morality and unselfishness, is always treated by the "Apostles of contentment" as the millennium, utopian, impossible; something to contemptuously laugh out of the argument.

John thought he saw a way in which it *was* possible that selfishness might be made to serve justice; and right become profitable. Other speakers followed the orator of the evening in brief speeches.

Then the chairman asked those who might wish to catechise, to write and send up questions to the desk, which he would try to answer with all possible information in his possession. Many did so. John sent one. All were promptly read aloud and answered. The answer made to John's question was so direct, so peculiarly simple and undeniable and yet so difficult for him to believe,—because of a practiced mental habit of reasoning so reversed to this clear truth—that he could not see it clearly. He was dazed with the new light, even as with the sunlight when he came down from his sleep on the morning that he left Sconset when coming from troubled sleep he met Old Jimmy McGurk, his own fate, and the morning sun at the door. He covered the eyes of his mind now, again, with the brown, hard-handed habit of his old-style thought, and felt it easier to believe this "a millennial vision," than the true and possible. He drew Thetty's last letter from his pocket; and lest he might forget a word of it, wrote on the back of the envelope, the question

he had asked, and its exact answer. Two men of genial manner went his way as he left the hall. He joined them, fearlessly, as if he had always known them well. They walked and talked together the entire way ; and he learned much. They shook his hand heartily at the door of the hotel, bade him good-night and strode on chatting together, toward the great Bridge.

John might suffer want or starve despite all this, so he thought, but he felt less alone, and went to his bed, a happier man.

CHAPTER XIV.

NORTH & CO. MORE PAY. PESTIFEROUS IFS.

OUR friend the erstwhile farmer, John Hardhand, had a predisposition to self-reliance. He was perhaps super-sensitive about asking favors of acquaintances that he had made simply as summer boarders at his home in Sconset. He was quite loth to presume on their desire or willingness to assist him in obtaining work. He had only called, in a casual and friendly way, on Mr. Windham, Mr. Dorrance, and at the little real estate office of Tendril & Co., all in New York. He called occasionally on Etta Foyle, at the little twelve-dollar flat in Brooklyn. She detailed to him the news she had from Thetty, believing it of interest to him, and it was a conveniently entertaining subject of conversation, for a correspondence with long intervals was maintained between them. Poor little Etta Foyle, bound to her daily work, was also bound nightly to the little top flat where her good widowed mother was all alone in Etta's absence. Consequently she rarely went out in the evening and had no gentlemen's society at all. John, fine looking, pleasant and kindly in manner, without affectation, and with the forceful, magnetic power of a great physique and a strong character, seemed grand and quite awe-inspiring to her. She was afraid of him. When he called, the odor of boiling cabbage and of soapsuds came up to their top flat

from the four double flat-floors beneath them, with a pitiless, sickening odor. Their little trifles of art and of bric-à-brac looked mean to her, and she was always both sorry and glad when he went. John saw it, in spite of her effort to be cordial and entertaining. He made his calls at rarer intervals, and finally neglected to call.

In his seeming hopeless extremity, John was at last constrained to appeal to Mr. Windham, to ask the aid of his influence ; and to also ask Mr. Dorrance and others to help him. They did not have employment for him, nor did they know or hear of an opportunity ; business was so dull. He was not sure that they were not offended ; and he regretted that he had not confined his efforts to strangers. As John's hope was going, his faith in men was getting somewhat shaken. At last he received a letter from Mr. Windham, and ocular proof, that "influence" is a valuable assistant to a man without opportunity. He had spent two months in the great city, vainly hunting a chance and here at last it came, through the "good word" of Mr. Windham. Mr. Windham had a personal friend who was a junior member of the firm of North & Co., wholesale dry goods merchants, a great house. Windham learned that they had recently discharged a foreman shipper whom they believed to be dishonest. Therefore, after saying the "good word" for John, he wrote him, to call at the office of the Company. John promptly did so and obtained employment in the place made vacant by the discharged man. A week later Mr. Windham sailed to Europe for his health, returning a year later. The man discharged for supposed dishonesty, had been superintending the packing and shipping of their goods,

had kept the delivery books of that department of the business of North & Co., and had been held personally answerable for all errors or misconduct of the assistants in his department.

John was capable of mind and muscle, and very glad to employ both ; as he did, to the entire satisfaction of the firm. Ten dollars a week was little enough pay for the services of a "good hand"—as John was. But since he was unfamiliar with the work, it was a kindness on their part, that they let him try to fill the position, and he was very glad to have the opportunity. Our hero worked, and earned and saved from waste, dollars for the firm, for which they paid him pennies, and even less. He thought they would learn his worth to them, and reward his work ; but they did not. How could they know ? They knew that no complaints of waste or error came to the office from John's department. But greater affairs occupied the attention of the members of the firm of North & Co. They never knew how John struggled, and what he made or saved, which was to them clear gain. No one ran to the office with information of that sort.

The office of a great business house is not unlike the throne of Royalty, in that it is the center *around* which intrigues, ambitions, calumnies, slanders and enmities wriggle and crawl and hiss and rattle. So much is unseen and unknown by the powers that be. So much of the knowledge that comes to the employers of men is only upon information and belief. Competing workmen have so much to gain by making direct or insinuating misrepresentations of their fellow-workmen—so much to gain by pulling others down, keeping them down, and building on their ruins, that they are ever

watchful to club down the one next in front, in order to walk over or into his place and get greater reward. Ever ready to stab the man alongside, or next behind, lest he be or try to be advanced to the place they want, or the pay they need, or perchance the place they occupy.

A man so innocent of the knowledge of the social characteristics of human nature, as to go to his employer boasting of his own worth, would surely and properly be discredited as a braggart ; and it is equally certain that no fellow-struggler for greater honors or pay, would sound his praise for him. Employers of men have little to gain by seeking correct information in regard to a well-doing hand, for such knowledge of facts, and such a revelation of the knowledge, to the hand, would only make greater drafts upon the conscience of the employers and encourage greater demands upon his wealth, for increased wages. Thus the noble work and faithful services of the most worthy men are often unknown "at the office," while the cunning, intriguing, and unworthy, trample their way to the top, there to serenely wallow in honors and profits.

When the Christmas holidays arrived, the firm sent to John, a white envelope, containing a ten-dollar note and "Merry Christmas." They simply had not been obliged to call John to account for any blunders or mischievous consequences of his work ; that is all. That is all they knew of him, and they showed their appreciation of that knowledge, by a present. And beside if they sent him a present of ten dollars, he would not be so likely to ask for a salary increase of a dollar a week, in which case even this ten dollars might have a saving power of forty-two dollars a year ; for they did not want the man to quit their service, from whom no evil report

had come to disturb their more important affairs. They would certainly advance him a dollar if he demanded it, but if ten dollars closed his mouth for a year, there was a good business consideration in making such a Christmas investment. John was not precisely an average man or his fate would surely have been worse. He could see through a millstone with so large a hole in its center. He began to get his eyes opened and to use them a little. He went to the office with the ten-dollar bill and asked to see the junior partner who sent him to the head of the house and to this personage John said in his frank, farmer fashion :

"Mr. North, I suppose I ought to be thankful for the ten dollars you sent me as a Christmas present, but really I am not, for we know so very little of each other, that I cannot see in it a token of affectionate regard, and I do not want to feel thankful for *charity*. I am not a helpless man. And I only want reward for what I do. As the sum is too small to estimate as an increase of annual salary, I prefer that you should take it back and give me instead, the increased wages which I earn, deserve, and have perhaps over confidently expected to get."

Once again, John was a surprise to a business man. Precisely as that other employer of men had looked at John when he declined to take "Billy's place" and crowd out the man with the fresh sorrow and sick wife, so Mr. North looked at Farmer John now, when he refused the ten-dollar note. He looked curiously, quizzically, at the honest, firm face, and hesitated a half minute before he spoke. Then, he said :

"Let's see, what is your name? What is your work?"

"John Hardhand. I am attending to the packing and shipping."

"Ah, yes. Well, John, you are one of five employees from whom no reports of mistakes or misconduct have come, and are on the list of names to each of which by my order, and for that good reason, a ten-dollar bill was sent." And after a short pause, he continued, "Then you want an increase of pay, do you, John? Our profits, the last year, considering what we usually expect to make, and considering the amount of capital we have invested in the business, were very small. We cannot afford to raise salaries much at the present time. You stick to your work, John. I want you to stay with us. We are suited with your services and will make the matter of pay all right as soon as business picks up a little."

"Since you seem to be interested in me, Mr. North, let me say to you frankly, I am nearly thirty years old; a man, not a boy, and I must be laying aside and accumulating while I am at my best and not be eating up the savings of other years. I have engaged to marry a noble and worthy woman. I need and want a home. I cannot get it with an income of ten dollars a week. I know that I earn much more. I would be glad to get more."

"Why, John, you ought not think of getting married, and running a home. You men are so rash. It would stagger you to know what it costs to keep up a home and provide for a family and all that. I know all about it. Take my advice, don't get married."

"Would you mind giving me a hint of the cost of maintaining your home?" asked John.

"Well, I can't tell exactly, but I have thirty-two

thousand dollars invested in the building lot, twenty-eight thousand in the house, and I suppose about ten thousand in furniture. Interest, taxes and repairs on these three items, at, say, ten per cent, amounts to seven thousand a year. Clothing, food and expenses of that sort, say about as much more, or perhaps a total of fifteen thousand dollars a year would cover the whole ; unless we consider our summer home at the Branch, and the trips to the mountains by Mrs. North and the girls. *You* don't need any nonsense of that sort. You could be just as comfortable and happy on a couple of thousand a year, probably, but of course we could not afford to pay two thousand dollars a year or anything like that for the work you are doing for us at present. What do you want, John ? ”

“ I don't expect to get what I want at present. I have told you what I *need*. I want nothing I do not earn. I don't expect that, but I do expect an increase of pay ; a little larger share of what I earn. I ought to get twenty dollars a week. I will ask for fifteen now, and then if your business profits increase, you will pay me twenty.”

After a little hesitation, Mr. North replied :

“ I will allow you twelve dollars a week now, John, and, if you continue to give as good satisfaction in the future as you have in the past, I will raise it to fifteen dollars, in March.”

“ Thank you,” said John.

“ Here, take the ten dollars,” said Mr. North.

“ I'd rather not.”

“ O, fiddlesticks, John. Here, put that in your pocket,” thrusting the bill into John's hand, “ and if you don't want to keep it, give it, for her Christmas present,

to ‘the noble and worthy woman,’ but don’t get married, John, don’t get married, you foolish man.”

“Mr. North! Mr. North!” called a junior partner from the farther side of the office, and Mr. North walked across to him, and thence to the cashier’s desk to sign a check. Two men had been standing there, behind John’s chair, who had been unnoticed by either Mr. North or John—awaiting their chance to talk to the “boss.” Two men who, unnoticed, had heard every word of the conversation between Mr. North and John Hardhand, and, fortune of evil fates! both of them were from John’s department.

John walked away in a dreaming, preoccupied manner. He was much cast down. He felt like a man who had shot at a moose and killed a mouse. But he picked up his mouse and walked sadly back to his work.

Twelve dollars now, a possible fifteen after March; three months hence. This, upon conditions not entirely certain. Whether he continued to give entire satisfaction, depended partly upon good fortune, partly upon the untried ability of his assistants, who were frequently being changed; and, even more, did it depend upon the good-will of every one, and the unselfishness of their service, and the motives that should lead or divert them. John had already with vigorous earnestness inflated so many balloons, decorated them with the brilliant colors of a seemingly-assured future, watched them mount up a little way with swelling heart of hope, only to see them burst and fall flat to the earth in utter hopeless worthlessness, that he inflated balloons no more; built no more castles of air. He measured and estimated such hard facts as came

to him, including the chances of defeat. He began to count his resources after this manner: "Mr. North does not and will not know the value of my work for him. He only knows me as the hired hand, who so far has simply attended to the shipping and packing of so many goods, and has in the performance of that simple service made no mistakes that have been considered worth calling to the attention of his employer." How many men able to do that much were every week, offering themselves at ten dollars a week or even less? John could well understand that with such knowledge of facts as Mr. North possessed, he might well and properly feel, in all kindness, that in raising John's wages two dollars a week he was both self-sacrificing and generous; and that the "fifteen dollars a week after March," which he had conditionally promised, was his voluntary gift to John; a prize, as it were, to encourage him to the most painstaking avoidance of mistakes, and that it should also warm John's heart towards him, as to an employer with some heart of pity, who willingly took interest in his servants.

If John had been very much younger, a trifle less observant of what had already come under his notice or a trifle more stupid, he might, probably would, have been quite delighted with the unusual kindness and easy familiarity of his employer. And estimating: "three months more, then fifteen dollars a week; then, three months more, twenty; three more, twenty-five, and so on," with the blind hopefulness of youth, he would have foreseen an income of three thousand six hundred and forty dollars a year, from such a ratio of increase, at the end of three years, and would have been exercising his mind with the problem how best to

invest it, or to most joyously spend it. Quite contrary to all such hopeful speculation, John dismissed from his mind all consideration of the twenty dollars which he had asked to be paid, and which Mr. North had silently ignored. He was wondering, if nothing should happen to prevent it, and he did at last secure a salary of fifteen dollars a week, if then, Thetty would think it safe to marry on such a salary ; and if she would feel that he ought to think so himself. He was troubled to determine whether or not it would be wise to take the risk of providing a home for so good a wife, and of supporting her comfortably ; if he could properly care for the children sure to come to them and that ought to be welcome ; if he could make the needful provision for sickness, the helplessness of old age, and the expense attending death. And John soliloquized, "A poor man cannot afford to die. Decent funerals are a luxury to drain his resources, put him into debt, and only add to his troubles."

John realized how very many unemployed men were anxiously waiting to secure even such an opportunity, such a position, as his. Wondered how soon they would secure it. And, *if* some one equally capable, but more needy than himself, should offer to do the work for less wages, *if* Mr. North would not hire the cheaper man instead. How small and uncertain a chance, indeed, was his ; if, if, if, if ! How many were the *ifs* that threatened him. He began to realize the fact that he had not a safe foundation for his foot on this wide earth.

"Blessed are the poor," for theirs is the kingdom of *earth* ? No : not now ; not just now.

What a terrifying host of contemptible one-eyed, two-

lettered little *Ifs* there are, standing about him, waiting to club down the ambitions of the man who has been cast into the hell of poverty.

Ifs. Those little devils of uncertainty and insecurity. They are with us all; but they just swarm about the homeless, the landless, the poor. When the lamed traveler falls, they deluge him with their devilish attentions; like flies around the footsore sheep, they come, to use every effort and hurry on the coming catastrophe. Father, forgive us! Men! Brothers! Have mercy on the poor.

Faithfully, heroically, John Hardhand struggled on toward the ray of hope. That possible three dollars advance, was a straw to grasp; a straw to help float the landless man, tossed into the sea of uncertainty with the homeless millions of men. He struck out bravely for that; perhaps it would float him to port. We shall see.

CHAPTER XV.

ACCIDENT, INTRIGUE, AND CRIME.

ON the day, the hour, that John Hardhand went to the office of North & Co. to return the white envelope and ten-dollar bank-note to his employer, it was discovered in the shipping room that the stock was short of a particular make and pattern of "French prints," or calico.

A short, florid little man remarked to a pale, quiet man beside him, "I say, Jim, come up to the office with me. I want to send you down to the custom-house to get a bonded warehouse order and to pay the duty, while I run down to the bonded warehouse and tell Driggs to get the cases out and ready for our truck. We must get Penfield's order off before noon, or the old Farmer will get his back up and do it himself."

The two men promptly laid aside their aprons, put on their coats, and hurried to the office. They entered quietly and stood still, on the thick rugs back of Mr. North's chair, awaiting their turn to talk with the individual whom they habitually styled "the boss."

Neither did their employer nor did John Hardhand—so earnestly were they engaged—notice these two men or know of their presence.

As John, with his back still towards them, arose and walked out of the room, the short man stepped up quickly to Mr. North, quite as if he had just then hastily

entered, and made his errand known. This Mr. William Short and his companion promptly left the office again with the custom-house order, and with a knowledge of John Hardhand's plans, and the relations between their foreman and the "head of the house" which augured only harm and evil to the interests of "The Farmer."

If the reader is even slightly familiar with the ambitions and intrigues of workmen in a great commercial business, he will appreciate the danger without further discussion of it. This was knowledge not intended for these assistants in John's department, unexpected by them, gained by a mere chance, unnoticed; a secret. So much the worse for John, so much the better for them. So much the less would suspicion of evil purpose color their acts and plans for the future, which were inspired by this surreptitiously gained knowledge.

About two weeks after this incident, John, in preparation for a short absence, arranged the work of his department as completely as possible, so as to relieve his assistants from most of the responsible and perplexing detail; leaving one of the two men referred to in charge, to look after the execution of his plans and instructions, he took the train for Sconset to spend a holiday week vacation—Christmas and New Year.

It transpired that Mr. North remained at business that holiday week, and the junior partners went to their New England homes to recreate. Mr. North was about the place that week more than he had been in any week before for many years. He often dropped in at the packing and shipping department. He chatted frequently with the man who was temporarily in charge of John's department. Mr. North investi-

gated the methods and system of the department with deep interest, while this man explained them, with all the assurance and modest exultation one might expect from him if he had been its originator. It did not pain him to discover that North appeared to see in him the author of so perfect a system. Mr. North was really delighted with what this man called "our" system, with an emphasis on "our" that plainly expressed "the system of Shorty and North," and plainly excluded John Hardhand. This little man accepted the high compliments which Mr. North paid the department with as much relish as if they belonged to him. Indeed, so blinding to right reason is the narrow thought born of selfish greed, that it is altogether probable this fellow did begin to believe the lie he was enacting, and in some sense, at least, to feel that the system was his because he was using it; as much his as John's, at least, or more his, just at this time.

Mr. North mentally determined to recommend this man's excellent judgment and methods to John's consideration on his return, and to suggest that John make of him a sort of first assistant, etc., etc., etc. A day or two before John's return, Mr. North was passing through the shipping department and inquired of Mr. Short, "How do you succeed with your work during the absence of Mr. Hardhand?"

"Oh, I can't complain. All right. No trouble at all. Wouldn't know that he was away only, when he is here, my work is interfered with a good deal, and he's dreadful bossy sometimes."

That charge against John by Short was a deliberate, ungarnished falsehood. John Hardhand gave his instructions in a simple and direct way, and never offend-

sively. If an assistant did not directly do the work asked of him, John would at once do it himself, and thus put the man to shame. It was shame for themselves and not fear of John that enforced the obedience of his assistants.

In the mass of mail for North & Co., there came one day a letter from Nordlinger, Harmon & Co., Chicago, Ill., and it read as follows :

“GENTLEMEN,

“Your invoice of yesterday has reached us, being for your first shipment on our order of December 16th. The Diamond Mills prints are not up to standard. Please cancel the remainder of our order for them, and substitute ‘Clifton Mills, assorted patterns,’ for the balance half case due. I will try to work off the Diamond Mills already shipped us, but we should be allowed a discount rebate because of their inferior quality which any novice can see.

“Very truly yours, etc., etc.,

“NORDLINGER, HARMON & CO.”

This half case of Diamond prints, together with other goods for them was already packed and marked for Nordlinger & Harmon when the countermanding letter reached North & Co.

It was the second day of January ; John had returned from Sconset. He directed that a case of Clifton Mills be opened and those goods used to replace the Diamond Mills which he ordered to be taken out of the case for Nordlinger & Harmon. As the items to fill the order were counted, and laid aside to be put in

the case for shipment to that concern, John had carefully checked each in the order book. In passing now, he ran them over with his eye a second time, and in doing so noticed a piece that had a box-nail tear in it, and a little rust stain. This he picked out and threw on to the counter, directing a man to open the other stock-case of Clifton Mills, and take out a perfect bolt to replace this one, put the damaged one into the full case and mark on the case : "One bolt damaged," and then nail up again. This man, after taking out the sound bolt of prints required, threw it on the counter beside the damaged one—the torn bolt—which John had thrown out. Another packer pushed the two bolts along, to make room for himself at the counter, and in doing so, turned the torn bolt over, damaged side down, and accidentally transposed the two, while the packer was smoothing the case lining. When the packer turned about, he therefore picked up and put back into the full case the same perfect roll which he had just now taken out, without even looking for the tear, and nailed it up again, supposing it was the damaged bolt, marked the case : "One bolt damaged," stenciled it, Kraft & Co., New Orleans, made out a shipping receipt, checked off their order, and in twenty minutes that case went off on a truck and aboard the steamer of the New Orleans S. S. Line. He returned to the case intended for Nordlinger & Harmon, packed and nailed it up, forgetting the bolt of calico on the counter, made out the shipping receipt and called the truckman. Then chancing to look toward the counter, he saw the omitted bolt of calico, picked it up, discovered the tear, and that it was the same bolt which John had ordered taken out and exchanged, and alas, now, the

full case was gone. Should he open the case and put back the damaged roll for Nordlinger & Harmon, against John's orders, or let it go "short," or what should he do? Vexed at himself, having no sound bolt now with which to replace the damaged one, for there was not another case of Clifton prints in the House, he cursed his own blundering stupidity and was pondering some scheme to escape the dilemma which might cost him his situation, when he overheard John saying to a boy, "Tell the truckman to back right up and put on that case for Nordlinger & Harmon."

"Here, Shorty," he said addressing the man who had made the blunder, and who at this instant saw his way of escape, "here, you run up to the office and get this warehouse order signed, then go down to Driggs' Stores with it. Tell Driggs' man to get down the cases right away, for our truck will be after them in twenty minutes."

Shorty ran up to the office, and as he came back with the signed order, and passed the packing counter, he caught up the torn bolt of calico and jammed it hastily down into a great mass of loose paper under the counter, then sped away. The case for Nordlinger, Harmon & Co. was sent out short one bolt of calico ; but this Chicago firm was very careful and scrutinizing in its business transactions, so much so, that the employees of North & Co. spoke of them as "chronic kickers." There was a business judgment-day coming, when there would be required an explanation of this shortage, a hereafter to be provided for ; and Shorty pondered to himself, "What shall I do when those Chicago Sheeneys write back, 'One roll short?'" He hoped some careless receiving clerk at Chicago might

pass the shortage, unnoticed; but that was too slight a straw to trust for safety.

Shorty was worried. He almost wished a fire might break out. Just a little fire, in the packing-room; so that amid the confusion of the little ruin, his blunder might hide. He discovered lint and a stumpy pencil and two or three match-ends in his just-discovered-to-be-dirty vest pocket, and instantly emptied the dirty debris onto the packing-room floor. O, if that torn bolt of calico were only out of the place; burned, sunk in the sea, anywhere but under the packing-room counter. He hurried back to the packing counter, shoved his hand away down into the paper heap under it, pretending to rest his hand there while he searched on the floor for the knife he had purposely dropped. There still lay the bolt of calico. His hand struck the hard dangerous fact. He felt a bit easier, and drew a long breath, as he noticed that no one was watching him. He had feared that some one's eyes were on him. When he remembered that the store closed at six, and only the watchman remained, alone, he was more alarmed than ever. At that time he, the watchman, cleared up the papers, swept the floors and brought tidiness and order out of the wreckage and "beach-drift" of business. How could Shorty get that bolt of cloth out of *his* way to-day?

Each workingman had his own little clothes-closet, numbered, locked, and each provided with a key. In this he kept his lunch box, his hat, hung his street clothes while he was at work, and his overalls, jumper, and apron when the day's work was finished. At noon, the workmen all went down into the warm engine-room to eat lunch; the only place, by the way, in which

they were permitted to smoke. This day, Shorty, pretending to complete some unfinished work, remained after the others had gone below. He ran over and hastily unlocked his closet door, stepped to the shipping door and looked about to assure himself that no watchful eye was upon him ; then he darted back, caught up the bolt of calico, put it in his closet, locked the door, and hurried off to the engine-room with his lunch. Shorty laughed very easily that day. He was wonderfully jocular ; prompt with repartee, and had an almost hysterical air of excitement. One of the men, in a bantering manner, remarked :

“ Guess Shorty’s been eating pickles.”

To which Shorty replied, “ Too darned poor to eat pickles, I am, been a eatin’ green persimmons of my own pickin’.”

Which remark was allegorically quite true. Shorty grew daily more petulant, irritable, and even impudent to John. John saw that for some reason, he could not imagine what, Shorty felt and acted hatefully toward him. John, therefore, exercised even more than his usual kindly good-fellowship toward the man, but with no avail. It seemed apparent that John’s kindness and goodness only angered him. It really did do so,—and why?

Shorty had become alarmed as the time drew near, when they ought to hear from Nordlinger, Harmon & Co. One day, going to his own closet for tobacco, he had chanced to discover that the key to John’s closet door had been left in the keyhole. There was no one in the passage-way at the time. Shorty took the bolt of prints from his own closet, wrapped it up in paper and string he found there. Then he ran with it

to John's closet, opened the door, put the bolt in there on its end in the corner, close against the wall, and pulled the skirts of an old, unused overcoat over it, so as to completely hide the bolt; locked the door, leaving the key still in the keyhole as he had found it, and took pains, a few minutes later, to say to another fellow, "What Jay is that, who has left his key in his closet door?"

"Why that is number eight, the foreman's closet," the fellow replied. And he took the key out and ran with it to John who thanked him but said he had left it there because he had a hole in his pocket, had already dropped it out twice that morning, and he feared he might lose it. He was not afraid that "the boys as" he familiarly called them, would steal his watch nor any of his clothing, and the pocketbook was about emptied of money.

I think that you, my reader, have now discovered why Shorty, since his blunder and crime, had acted so unkindly toward John Hardhand.

There is always, for a wrong-doer, who has knowingly wronged another person, a tempting desire to offend the wronged one, excite his anger, and make, of that anger, petty excuse for the injustice.

If your friend owes you money, and does not desire to pay it, he straightway begins to scandalize you among your friends, and to personally abuse you.

CHAPTER XVI.

A HOLIDAY VISIT TO SCONSET. THETTY AND MAGGIE IN NEW YORK. THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN IN FOURTEENTH STREET. SHADOWED.

SHALL we not also consider for a moment, the history which John was making at Sconset, during the week in which Shorty was plotting his overthrow in the Dry Goods Jobbing House of North & Co.

On that day preceding Christmas, when John had left undone no good thing which could make easier and simpler the work of his assistants, when he had made all needful provisions for the safety of his employer's interests, for he had a superstitious sense of impending catastrophe—when he had bought a few presents, packed his great satchel, shaken hands with all “the boys” and finally gone aboard the train; when he realized that he was going home, going toward Sconset,—though he had so little to comfort him or to be thankful for, though even hope held out so little promise—yet his heart swelled with pleasant emotions at the thought of the joy of “Home,” and mother and Thetty,—the sweetness and restfulness of it all.

He had room in his great chest for only little breaths. He gasped. Tears were in his eyes. And he gazed out of the car windows at the fields and forests flying by, with a piteous expression on his face, so mixed and confused were his emotions of joy and agony. A fall of light dry snow covered the hard frozen ground, and

the smart cutters and flying horses and cheerily ringing bells made jolly welcome to John's eyes and ears as the train rolled up to Sconset Station and he hurried out. Paul was there, awaiting him with the cutter, and Thetty and Maggie and Candace. The girls all caught at him and kissed him as if they had a right, and pulled his gripsack out of his hand, laughed and chatted and almost cried, talked so much, so rapidly and in such confusion that it would require a phonograph to catch it, and even then no transcribing pen could ever write it out. They interrupted John, and one another with perfect recklessness. No single sentence was quite completed amid the happy babel. When we attempt to express the inexpressible it must needs be in confused, unintelligible utterances. But faces, gestures and tones, said plainly enough, "We are all very happy." They clambered into the cutter in the most informal confusion, laughing and chattering ; and John was as frolicsome as the others.

Thetty remained at Mr. Hardhand's to tea. Maggie, Candace and Paul drove back to Mr. Vick's. After supper, John and Thetty walked up to her home ; Mrs. Vick gave him an almost motherly kiss, Farmer Vick roared a welcome and later on, John and Thetty were left alone in the parlor to visit by themselves. Thetty crept into his lap and put her arm around his neck. She told though she need not, for the hundredth time, how glad she was to have him back again. They talked freely, and then, for the first time, Thetty learned what John had passed through in his struggle, or at least a part of it, and she sobbed in sympathy for John, and for the poor man whose dead baby and sick wife stood one day between John and his chance.

"Don't you believe, John, that you could do better up here at Scarborough?" suggested Thetty.

"It may be I might," John replied; "but I am sure of my place with North & Co., or pretty sure, and I'm afraid of those big manufacturing monopolists at Scarborough. Mr. Riff, Mr. Opolee, and such men are hard masters. I know them, too, and so it wouldn't be easy to let them trample me under, without fighting back."

"I don't care," said Thetty, a little impatiently, "you'd be right here where you'd have friends to come to, and sympathy, and love. Pa had a brother, a year or two older than himself, who went down to New York a few years before I was born. He married a sweet woman, and was very prosperous and happy for a year or two. Father visited them there, two or three times. They had one child, a daughter. After my uncle lost his wife, he had 'bad luck' as pa calls it, lost his work, lost his property, lost his courage, lost his reputation, drank himself into misery and beggary,—and, lost his life. I always said and believed it was for lack of friends and love and a home and unselfish advice. The little girl was five or six years old when she was orphaned, and we have never learned what became of her. I presume she also died. Pa never talks about Uncle William without the tears coming into his eyes, so we rarely mention his name. I think there are as good opportunities in Scarborough as in a great city, and fewer dangers.

"Ah, Thetty, at Scarborough there might be only the greater shame and the more bitter humiliation of defeat for *me*, in the presence of those whose love and whose

respect is to me, more than full compensation for all I may have to silently suffer in the great city. No, Thetty, I had best stick to North & Co., at least until I am sure of a better place."

"Let's talk no more then, now, John, of that sad side of life, but make the most of our holiday and be happy while we can."

The two lovers billed and cooed, and gossiped over Sconset news, until nearly eleven o'clock, when John went back to his father's house, feeling so light-hearted and happy, that New York and Scarborough, and the troublers and the troubled were quite out of mind. O, how deep and sweet and restful was his sleep that night in mother's dear old farm-house bed! "Bless her," he said, as he dropped off to sleep, "Bless her."

That week was a continuous feast and frolic. John declared he was getting so enamored of play, he would be spoiled if his vacation were prolonged. That he even now began to feel a dread of going back to work. Really, it was not the work John dreaded, though he did shrink from going back, it was the dependent position, the insecurity, the uncertainty of it, that he feared. So full of his own anxieties and cares was John Hard-hand that they absorbed his attention and filled his mind, and strange as it seems to us, he scarcely thought a second time, of Thetty's uncle; nor did he mention to any of the Vicks,—if he had thought of it at all at this time,—the vision of Thetty's double, in Fourteenth Street. Certainly he had not thought now of any relation between the face that had fascinated and frightened him, and this face that he loved. For some reason, unaccountable to himself, the face of the woman for whom he had no name, was as that of a mysterious

being with no positive, material associations. Her blasted life, a fate, possible to even so good a soul as Thetty Vick; the thought fascinated and frightened him. He did not associate it with any real existence, or with kinship to any mortal. He returned to New York the evening of New Year's day, and an interesting New Year's beginning was meted out to him as we shall shortly see.

Two days after John's return to the city, Thetty and Maggie went to New York to do shopping; something they had never done but once before, and it happened this wise: Mr. Vick had given them a Christmas present of money in crisp new bills, sufficient to buy each a silk dress. They wanted also, laces, materials for new hats, and other women's dainties. They discussed the matter with John and determined that they could save the amount of their fares, and something more, by buying in New York. And another fact, quite as important to the artistic feminine mind, they could see there the newest styles in dress and adornment; could elevate their tastes and gain knowledge by the use of their eyes, as they could not in quaint old Sconset or Scarborough. The girls could not be prepared in time to go with John. So "awfully" much, have women to do, in their preparation to face a critical female world. John left home on the second, and the girls on the fourth of January. John awaited them at the Forty-second Street depot, escorted them to Earle's, secured a room for them, and in the evening took them to the Academy of Music to hear Denman Thompson in the "Old Homestead." After the play, the three went to a café for a luncheon; a night dinner. As they were walking through Fourteenth Street

laughing, chatting and so exceedingly happy, under the bright glare of the electric lights, there came toward them, a figure and face that made John's heart start with a jump. It was "She," the woman without a name. Maggie and Thetty, one on each arm of their escort, made a bright and happy picture. "She" came directly toward them, gazing curiously into their faces. The girls both saw her; but hoped John had not. They recognized her likeness to Thetty. A terrible truth flashed through their minds. John determined to keep his secret from them. He feigned abstraction; pretended not to notice the woman, and as he felt the hand of his affianced clutch his arm spasmodically, he turned his eyes to Thetty. Her face flushed, paled; she looked searchingly at him. He betrayed no emotion. She was spared humiliation, for she was deceived. John had for very pity's sake acted another lie, because of that woman. Both Thetty and Maggie were greatly disturbed, and it was impossible to conceal it nor did they earnestly try to do so since John, as they thought, had no suspicion of their discovery. They were convinced, at once, that this was the lost cousin; they also perceived her social position and character. John immediately recalled to them some of the funny sayings and doings of Joshua Whitcomb, of the two "old boys" Ci and Seth, and provoked much laughter during their pleasant lunch and their leisurely-taken walk down Broadway and through Canal Street to their hotel. But Thetty's laugh had a nervous, hysterical ring, unlike the bird-like tones of her laughter before that incident in Fourteenth Street.

The "strange woman" had moved aside as they

met her, had demurely passed them by; but immediately turned and followed them, unnoticed. She saw them enter the restaurant, and waited on the opposite side of the street until they came out. She followed them at a distance, in the shadows, down Broadway, saw them enter and disappear in the hotel. Twenty minutes later, a lady wearing a lace net veil (it was "She," the strange woman), entered Earle's Hotel, in company with a fine-looking, smooth-faced gentleman, went directly to the registry book, looked over the arrivals and found the following entry :

"Misses Maggie and Thetty Vick, Sconset, Conn.," and beneath that written in penciling, the memorandum :

"Guests of John Hardhand."

This woman asked the clerk if Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop Moore, of Hastings, New York (fictitious names) had "arrived," to which after looking over the registry book, he answered, "No, ma'am;" and the two strangers walked away. Mr. North gave John permission to go next day, with the Sconset "good little women" a-shopping. They visited all the great stores in Sixth Avenue, Broadway, Fourteenth and Twenty-third Streets, and had such a jolly and profitable gain in it all, for both body and mind, that when John kissed them after putting them aboard the cars, with their bags and parcels and happy faces, "She," the twelve dollar salary, the cares and troubles were, for the moment, quite out of his mind.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN HARDHAND'S ARREST.

THE letter from Nordlinger, Harmon & Co., of Chicago, at last reached the office of North & Co. The stock record for that day was looked up. It was found that in the morning of the day on which that particular Chicago order was shipped, there was one and a half cases only of Clifton Mills prints, and that on closing the books, at night, there was none at all in stock. The delivery books showed that one case had been shipped to Kraft & Co., New Orleans, and a half case shipped to the Chicago firm. They immediately wrote to New Orleans, inquiring if the case contents were all right as per bill sent ; answer came :

" Yes, except that we did not find the damaged roll as mentioned on the bill and marked on the case. Presume the damage is trivial, and that it is not worth our while to make a rebate claim. Thanks for the notice, etc."

A single piece of cotton prints was no considerable loss to North & Co., but the neglect that would lose a roll of prints would as easily lose a piece of silk. Or the envying greed that would yield to the temptation of a piece of calico, would only the more promptly indulge the theft of a roll of velvet. John Hardhand was called to the office and sharply reproved for the

dereliction. It hurt him, and he could make no explanation of the mystery. John's ambitious assistant was complimented by Mr. North at the same time, that John himself was reprobated for not having exercised due care. Saturday came. He was given notice that William Short, "Shorty," would be advanced thereafter to a position the same as his own, and he was told to consult with "Shorty" always and in all matters, pertaining to the shipping department.

John Hardhand saw surely, now, that the reasonable hope of fifteen dollars a week advance after March was lost to him. He neither guessed nor presumed, but knew, that he had carefully checked over each item of that order shipped to Nordlinger, Harmon & Co. The order and the shipping book each had his check mark after every entry. He knew that the crime or the carelessness was not his own ; and also realized that his own presence in the service of North & Co. would be a continually threatening danger to the guilty person—whoever he might be. He was convinced there must be and would be further treachery, among his assistants, upon whom he depended for success in the execution of his business system and methods ; the men whom he not only wished, but was obliged, to trust. He was wronged, humiliated, overwhelmed with anxiety, and completely discouraged. In a letter to his brother Paul at the time, he expressed the unfortunate circumstance and its disastrous consequence, affecting himself and his ambitions, thus :

"O, my dear brother, this most unfortunate affair quite unmans me. With faith in my future, in my ability to win advancement ; cheered with the promise of even a little more reward for my effort ;

encouraged by my own dreams of success ; with the mirage of joy, a hopeful life, and the restfulness of such employment as I like and choose, to beckon me on, I have not sensed the present, nor felt the pain of it. For the eyes of faith look up, not down, and, distracting the mind from the painful way of life, fill one's heart with the magnificent purpose of life. But when hope is denied, the calloused and cracked hands smart. They feel clumsy. The joints are stiff. The pain of living fills the mind and drowns all other sense ; thrills every abraded pulsating nerve with the agony of it all. We find it impossible to stand erect ; to straighten the back so long and cruelly bent with unrequited toil. And, O, the paralysis of despair that threatens ! Despair is a terrible master. Must I yield to despair ? "

The bolt of calico lost was of too dangerous significance to be forgotten. Bolts of cloth do not evaporate, fly through the air, nor walk about the earth. They are moved about at the will of intelligent minds, by human hands. The private detective of North & Co. was told to find the particular hands that had moved a particular bolt of missing calico. This detective was generally supposed by the employees of North & Co., to be a sort of assistant janitor, or an agent of the owner of the building ; and indeed he did, on occasion, look after and supervise repairs, which supervision served the double purpose of care for the small needs of the building and of hiding the identity of his real secret service, and in that way increasing the utility. He set about his work without attracting John's attention in the least. Passing and repassing, he watched all movements, all "hands" in John's department.

Shorty, Shorty only, seemed to have detected the

detective, and to give evidence of that discovery by exercising an unusually quiet dignity, and an uncommonly benign fraternity toward Mr. Karl. As this man, the detective, walked rapidly through the room one day with eyes down-looking, as if absorbed in thought, he whirled about instantly, after going a few feet out from the door, and caught Shorty peering out, watching him, with a face of absolute terror. In the afternoon of that day, the detective came with a carpenter to take up the closet floors so as to get at a conveniently disordered gaspipe. He pointed to Shorty's closet, and told the man to take that floor up first; Sent the carpenter to get the keys, and told him to remember which person each key was obtained from, so as to return them without confusion. As the man opened Shorty's closet, the detective directed him to take out all the things and put them on the counter out of his way. As he did so the detective carefully watched, until the last article was laid aside, and then, with a look of disappointment on his face, walked away. He did not wait to see the other closet floors removed and the gaspipe repaired—if it needed repairing. As the carpenter came to each closet in succession, he removed all articles from it, before taking up the floor. John's closet was the last of the row. With innocent heedlessness he threw John's clothing onto the counter, and the piece of calico, the last item to come out, he threw on top of the clothing, and with chisel and hammer, attacked the floor. A moment later, Mr. North, accompanied by an insurance inspector, in passing through the room, noticed the calico, and the "Clifton Mills" brand, and said to the carpenter:

"Where did you get—that?"

The carpenter told him, and Mr. North said,

"Did you tear the paper off where the label shows?"

"Yes, sir; some coffee, or something sticky, had run down between the bundle and the wall and stuck it fast; that tore off as I took the bundle out."

Mr. North quietly remarked to the carpenter, "You go up to the office and take that bolt of calico with you. I will be there in a few minutes."

Ten minutes later the detective and the carpenter were closeted together in Mr. North's office. The detective directed the carpenter to take a wet sponge to closet number eight, remove the piece of paper that had stuck to the wall and bring it to him; which he did. It fitted the torn hole in the paper that enveloped the calico, exactly. Toward evening John Hardhand was called to the private office of Mr. North. As the latter closed the door and sat down alone with John, in the room, a look of pitying sorrow came into his face, like the pain of a great disappointment. He mentally recalled the satisfied, restful confidence that John's honest face had inspired when they had had their first interview, and again when John came to return the ten-dollar gift. He recalled John's frank expression of his desires, and the laudable ambition to improve his condition. He remembered John's anxiety for the arrival of the time when he might marry the good woman whom he loved, and his zeal to acquire sufficient resources for the home he needed and deserved. Because of those desirable and tempting ends, Mr. North was inclined to be less harsh in judging the supposed means, to attain so worthy an end, and he mentally soliloquized, "After all we are but weak creatures, honest only until temptation comes

with promise to satisfy our hopes." He looked genuinely sad, as, addressing John, he said slowly,

"John, I am very sorry indeed, to have been forced to abandon first, my confidence in your prudent care of my interests, and last, but worst of all, to lose my confidence in your honesty."

"What do you mean, Mr. North?"

"I mean that your theft of a few days ago is discovered, and that the evidences of your guilt are complete. You are dismissed at once. But I wish first to talk with you, hoping to learn why, and how, you were so tempted, and to prevent, if I can, the recurrence of such a misfortune to yourself and to others."

Startled, wide-eyed, and dazed, John drew a long deep breath, a nervous sigh; his momentary silence and visible excitement seemed like a desperate effort at self-control. But his tongue loosened again at last, and he replied.

"You startle me with the terrible charge of a crime of which I am not guilty, and with the absurd statement of existing evidence to prove the cruel falsehood. I can see at once that my denial will have little influence on your judgment, yet for the satisfaction of duty to myself I shall speak truly. I declare to you, the infamous charge is as false as the plotting is malicious and the evidence impossible."

"Do you, then, refuse to make the confession which I had hoped would entitle you to my pity, though it made respect for you impossible? Do you deny the theft,—of that piece of calico?"

"Mr. North," and John sprang to his feet, "Mr. North, theft is a crime I could never commit, sir! I demand an explanation of this miserable calumny."

"Sit quietly, where you are ;" Mr. North rang the call bell, and a boy came in, to whom he said, "Tell Mr. Karl, and the carpenter with him, to come in here."

The two entered, the detective bearing the strayed piece of "Clifton prints."

Mr. North, turning to John, said, "Hardhand, Nordlinger, Harmon & Co. reported that they were a bolt of calico short, from the lot shipped to them two weeks ago." And turning to the carpenter, "Carpenter, where did you find that bolt of cloth?"

"In number eight closet in the shipping department, sir."

"From whom did you obtain the key to it?"

"From this man you call Hardhand."

"Hardhand," said North, turning to John, "is number eight your closet?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you give this man the key to it, this morning?"

"I did, sir ; but he lies if he says he found that bolt of cloth in my closet."

"Not so fast, Hardhand. Here, Karl," turning to the detective, "what evidence have you that this carpenter tells the truth?"

"This piece of paper,"—holding up the bit,—"I myself, saw sticking fast, to the wall of closet number eight, Karl replied, and I sent the carpenter to remove it from the wall and bring it to me. He did not know why I wanted it, or for what purpose, and I find it to be the piece torn from this wrapper around the calico. See?" and as he spoke he fitted the piece of paper to the hole in the wrapper, "see? I found on touching my

tongue to it that it had the taste of sweetened coffee. I also examined the hat-shelf in closet eight and found that a leaking coffee can had some time dripped its contents onto the shelf, and that the coffee had run down from it along the wall in the corner of the closet in three sticky streaks, where this carpenter said he found the bolt of cloth ; precisely corresponding to those three streaks down the wall, are the three dark coffee-stained lines you see here on this piece of paper. The carpenter could not have made those dried coffee streaks and these stains in three hours' time, and I saw both in less than thirty minutes after he began his work and immediately after you sent for me."

Then Mr. North inquired, turning to John, "Did you carry that closet key with you while you were away on your vacation ? "

"Yes, sir."

"Have you ever let any one have the key since it came into your possession, until you let the carpenter take it this morning ? "

"No, sir. I am positively sure I have not ; and if that bolt of cloth is claimed to have been found in my closet, it is to me, a sane person, *irrational* and impossible. It could not possibly have been put in there without my knowledge, and yet I have no knowledge of it whatever, though you seem to prove that it was there. What collusion of hell and men is plotting or concluding my ruin ? "

"I had hoped you would not so impudently brave out your folly. I had determined that if you would frankly confess, tell me all, your method, your object, and of the terrible temptation that misled you, I would

spare you the humiliation of arrest and punishment. But I also determined that if you attempted to shield your crime behind a lie, the law should take its course with you. You, a trusted man, who have betrayed the confidence we placed in you." Hesitatingly, "Hardhand, you may still take your choice; what is your answer?"

A score of terrors confronted John Hardhand. He sat dumb. A deathly pallor overspread his face. Even his lips became colorless. Then rushed madly to his brain the thought of John Hardhand, proven, convicted, a thief. He thought of Thetty ; poor Thetty ; his lips soundlessly moved as if to shape her name. He thought of his grand, true, honest, old father ; of his broken-hearted mother, who might die for the shame of his public dishonor, but would never believe him guilty. He thought of his good name ruined—trailed through the columns of the newspapers to sate the brutish appetites of those who curiously seek after and wallow in the carrion of crime, calumny and persecution. All this, because some damning circumstantial evidence proved him a thief. He, who had never done a dishonest act nor ever knowingly a dishonorable one, in his life. His reasoning mind had to admit the strength of the evidence which circumstances had brought against him. He remembered distinctly, now, how he had many times in his life judged instantly, and with blasting contempt, those against whom evidence even less convincing than this, had been arrayed, and that he had heedlessly voiced his convictions and spread the cursing word of condemnation. "Heaven forgive me," he whispered half aloud, as he thought, they too, like himself, might have been guiltless.

Mr. North watched him closely and his quick ear caught the whispered words. He spoke kindly, but quickly to John and said, "Then you confess the crime?"

John startled by the words, sprang to his feet. Hot blood from his pent heart, rushed to his face again. The manly sense of the terrible injustice done him by such a charge, came over him, and drove him on. His eyes flashed with the fury of an outraged animal, the fury of a last fight with the hounding fates that had surrounded him and had left no escape,

"No, sir!" He shouted it. "No, sir! I confess to nothing of the sort. I confess only to the existence of ruinous evidences of guilt which I cannot at this moment disprove, except by my now worthless word. But it is all a base, malicious lie. What cruel fate, or devilish scheme of plotting men has placed me in this strait, I do not know. I only know I am an innocent man. The ruined victim of fate, or of scheming men. I see before me a lost name, the contempt of those whom I hold dearest, the more wounding pity of those who love me, but whose judgment will slowly see in me a fallen man. The lost respect of yourself and others whom I have faithfully served or would yet faithfully serve. If I felt that I could not, soon or some time, disprove this falsehood, this cruel hurt, I would wish that I might instantly die. But never, for love of truth and manhood's sake, can I admit the lie. I need not ask your mercy on other terms, as I refuse it on the terms you offer. You may proceed to ruin my name, but you shall not ruin my conscience nor embrute my manhood. Now, do your worst; proceed, sir, and do your worst."

Mr. North hesitated, trembled a little; himself, in

turn, turned pale. He whispered to the detective, who promptly arose and walked out. Mr. North stepped to the door of the office and reached his hand toward the key as if he was about to lock it on the inside.

John sprang to his feet. His eyes gleamed with anger, and took on a desperately threatening look like that of a beast at bay, as he fairly hissed the words through his clenched teeth, "Man! don't dare insult me further, or I shall be driven with frenzy to strike you dead! I shall not try to escape, or if I should, you cannot prevent me, and have not even the authority of law to do so. Don't dare to attempt it, nor to insult me further."

Mr. North, pale, trembling, and alarmed, watched the great fellow, so terribly magnificent in his anger, expecting John would fall on him and crush him. The little German carpenter, looked wistfully toward the door, and Mr. North moved to one side as if to make way for John to pass out. John stepped to the door, took out the key, threw it into the waste basket, flung the door wide open, walked back to his seat, sat down with deliberate coolness, and to Mr. North who but for the shame of it would have run out of the room, said,

"You need not feel uneasy, sir. I am awaiting the warrant of law, and the officer you have sent for. Be seated, please, I shall not run away. You need not run away. But you, sir, have neither moral nor legal right to make me a prisoner, and the officer, only, has *legal* right to do so."

They waited in ominous discomforting silence many minutes. The great office clock ticked off threateningly

its monosyllables of passing time, and recalled to the mind of John once more the philosophy and the prophecy of the old kitchen clock in the Sconset home, on that night before he ventured to launch his hopes upon the social sea of the great city. That night seemed so long ago, now. Time had since been for him so filled with experiences impossible to forget. Mr. North twisted a bit of paper into a little roll, and felt that his beating heart might be heard. The little carpenter blew regular nasal whizzings through his bristling, sheared mustache. It seemed such a long wait;—finally the detective came in with some papers in his hand and was immediately followed by a police officer. The detective whispered to Mr. North, who rang a bell and said to the boy that answered the summons, "Do as this man directs," pointing to the detective.

The latter then said to the boy, "Go down to the shipping department, and tell that short, red-faced man employed there, to come up here immediately."

Away went the boy, down the stairs, two steps at a time shouting as he entered the packing-room, "Hey, Shorty! H-e-y Shorty!" And to a man bent over the edge of a packing-case, with his heels off the floor, and nearly standing on his head to lay the bottom course in a case of dress goods, the boy again cried, "Hey, mister, where's Shorty?" The man tipped back onto his feet, teetered his head up out of the case and replied, "I don't know; think he's gone down to the custom-house or to the warehouse. He went out of here a few minutes ago, just as the janitor came through on his way upstairs. P'raps he's gone home; he hasn't been well all day, said he felt most down sick. He looked broke up and was pale. Says he's

dead sore, right in there," putting his hand to his left side. "He has probably lifted too much. Lifted something he hadn't ort to ; something too heavy for him."

To which the boy suggested, "Mebby it's jist de Grippe. He had de Grippe awful last winter, don't yer know? When a feller gets de Grippe he can't never get rid of it ;" away he went to the office whistling, "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-aye," and said to Detective Karl, "De fellahs says Shorty's sick o' de Grippe an has gone home."

"Come," said the police officer to John Hardhand, and the two walked out together.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE TO THE JAIL, THE OTHER TO HIS CLUB.

As John Hardhand, with the officer, stepped out from the office door of North & Co., he turned, bowed respectfully to Mr. North, as was his custom, and put on his hat. Mr. North followed and detained them a moment as he took John's great hard hand in his soft one, and said, with apparent nervousness but much kindness, "I am exceedingly sorry for this." His voice sounded only just above a whisper, husky and dry. His hand felt cold and shaky in John's palm, and John knew that for some unknown reason North still respected him and was not confident that he was doing right. "If you are held for trial and bail is needed, in the morning, let me know, through an officer," said Mr. North.

To which John answered, "You are deceived, Mr. North ; and I hope it is at least without malice that you are doing me this terrible harm. I only ask one last favor of you, and 'tis due to yourself as well as to me : I ask you to continue your search for the man who did this evil thing. Do it for the sake of justice, and the defense of a helpless, innocent man. I have nothing to say of your offer to find me bail, but to remind you that you might have spared me the need of it if you had been more thorough and less precipitate in judgment and punishment. I hope I may not need

bail. I shall not send to you to find it for me ; good-bye."

In all the business experiences of George North he had never before done what he considered a business duty with such reluctance, and with such a sense of shame and humiliation to his self-esteem. Somewhy, John's face and presence disproved the association of crime. That frankly honest-looking face belied all this 'material evidence,' and, for Mr. North's own peace of mind, he wished John was more a sneak and less a man, or wished he might find fuller evidence than this which he had, or if it were possible, learn that Farmer John *was* a petty thief. He should feel uncomfortable until he could forget the angered, outraged innocence of that face, or know that John was a thief. He would seek for fuller evidence against him. North went to his club that night, and wrestled with politics and tariffs, to divert his mind. He astonished some of his friends at the American League, by his disposition to disagree with them—something quite new for him.

"O, bosh," said he to S. N. De Kaight, the proprietor of a great carpet factory, "bosh ! Don't talk here, and to me, to-night, about your desire to help 'the American workingman.' That 'goes' on the street or on the stump, but we fellows in this club don't need or want that cant, and to-night, begging your pardon, De Kaight, it wearies me. Ha ! ha ! We are profited by the high prices we get for our commodities, and by the lowest prices to us of labor, tools, opportunities, and the means of production. You know it, we all know it, and we make the most of *our opportunity*. It makes me sick to have those questions of principle burlesqued inside these closed doors ; that ill-smelling, self-convicting

falsehood of our tender care for workingmen. I've just locked up one of them for stealing a little miserable roll of calico—probably taken to eke out the scant wages I pay him, and which would not buy my cigars—and I know, very well, that his daily strain of mind and body in my service is greater by far than my own. Here, De Kaight, have a cigar. Waiter, bring a bottle of Vin Cliquot, three or four glasses and some ice. I say, Brady, join us! Let's talk horse or yacht, or have a game of whist. Whist on politics for to-night, anyhow. Ha, ha, is it agreed, gentlemen?" He filled his glass, and lifting it, with a kindly, beaming smile he said, "Here's to —," and Brady completed the toast, "the man who seeing that some must serve and some be served, cunningly chooses his place and wisely keeps it." Brady was what politicians call "a party kicker," and forever driving his spear into any armor-plate that opened a crack. It was De Kaight's turn now to say, "Hi, hi, there, no more politics," and Brady for a last word added, "Oh, that isn't politics, that's business religion."

They repaired to the card-room. Cards were brought in and De Kaight sat shuffling them, but Brady, the incorrigible tease, stirred up the political pool again with a humorous thrust at Mr. North.

"Ah, ha, North," said a brother clubman then, "you quite astonish me, with so radical a change of front. Only yesterday evening you gave us a lively lecture on our indifference in the matter of the fund the club is raising for the 'State Committee,' and assured us that if we manufacturers and agents and merchants that depend on home trade did not come to the support of the party of strong government, which is doing so

much for us, the riff-raff of society would bring upon us political and financial ruin. Wasn't it yourself, or was it Winthrop? Who, then, in our hot political talk, argued, that these 'confounded ignorant workingmen haven't a cent to lose, no property to be protected, no material interest in the legislation of laws.' I remember you continued with the argument, that, because of that fact, and because many were not even native-born, the 'great mass of dangerous riff-raff had no natural right to a vote,' and that 'the safety of our good government demanded their disfranchisement.' That having for themselves no stake in the government, they were a sure menace and promise of ruin to the financial and business interests of the country; that the selling price of their ballots was the only directly gainful resource politics offered to them. That though the purchase of their votes had served a good turn now and then, they were getting dictatorial and needlessly expensive political factors, and the expense and insolence ought both to be stopped, by exacting property qualifications and permitting the use of the ballot, only, to those whose interest demands the defense of their own 'property rights,' rather than to permit farther the abuse of the ballot by those whose greed and need both incline them to despoil the property of others."

"I beg pardon, Mr. Crooks," said North, "I am still of the opinion that not half the voters are fit to exercise the franchise, but I am not so absolutely sure, aside from my selfishness, *which* half it is. You are a lawyer, not a manufacturer nor manufacturer's agent. Your legal knowledge makes of you—though out of the regular order—a desirable member of the manufacturers' club, but you have little interest in the general good

result of legislation ; and all your profit is in the *business* of legislation ; therefore we might naturally disagree, and as I am not in considerate, political humor to-night, will you kindly defer politics until another time ? Let me fill your glass ? ”

Then the subject of politics was dropped, light gossip was taken up, the cards were dealt, and the first game of whist was started, which was followed by another, and “the rubber,” and so on for the remainder of the evening, — *Whist*.

John Hardhand was not dragged to the Station House. He walked. Walked along beside the officer who, though he had a pair of handcuffs in his pocket, not for a moment thought it necessary to use them. He chatted all the way, pleasantly, with John, and did not even take hold of his prisoner’s arm. Nobody followed. Nobody ran ahead. There was nothing dramatic in that portion of the criminal episode. Whoever passed them might have supposed from their manner that the officer had met some old-time friend on his beat, and was recalling boyhood’s memories. The passers-by probably did think so, if they gave any notice at all. The officer did most of the talking, and John’s answers were so direct, so frank, so pathetic and almost sad, that the officer could not have put the nippers on John if it were to save himself from a week’s suspension and the sergeant’s rebuke. He could not treat him unkindly, for John had such an honest, kindly face, so strong and yet so pitiful in its expression of hounded misery. Thus shines out through the human face a white and honorable soul.

Farmer John Hardhand was placed in a comfortable cell, yet not out of the hearing of shocking language

and a very medley of sounds that assailed his ears, troubled his mind and pained his heart, as he sat on the edge of the cot, or walked up and down, through the long sleepless night. Sounds that rang in his ears, throughout all the years of his after life. Thoughts new and strange. Proofs of the little diverging social lines, and the subsequent environments that make of a human being, prince or pauper or pest. And ever after his heart was softened toward the vicious and erring.

At the morning sitting of the Police Court were scenes, too, to fill a book with the piteous and tragic. The officer who had arrested him came into the court, smiling pleasantly at John, and took his seat near the desk. The detective and the carpenter came also, and when his case was called, they detailed the facts they knew pertaining to it. John admitted their statements to be true, but denied the crime. He was held by the Court for trial, and bail was fixed by the Judge at two hundred dollars.

A lady with a veil over her face arose in the back of the court-room, came down the aisle to a seat in the second row, and touching a well-dressed, ministerial-looking man on the shoulder, spoke rapidly to him in a half whisper. He immediately arose, and said aloud :

"I will furnish bail for this man, John Hardhand, and will deposit with the Court two hundred dollars cash, if it so please the Judge." Thus the strange man spoke. John gazed after the woman as she walked back to her seat. Every line of her figure, every motion of her gracefully swaying carriage, was that of Thetty Vick. His throat seemed to spasmodically close with the lump in it. He trembled perceptibly and uttered a low tearless sob. Then he gazed at the

man, who, but for the diamond that scintillated in his white silk scarf, he would have positively declared was a soft-souled clergyman. He was, however, a professional gambler.

John recalled then the tones of "her" half-loud whisper, and "the man's" reply, so loud that he had heard every word. "Certainly, Mamie, if you are sure the fellow is white, and won't skip and come the sneak business on me."

And "her" whisper. It was the same sweet tone he had heard three months ago in front of a Third Avenue store show-window. This was not Thetty Vick. It was "She." And some of the fear and hate left the heart of Farmer John; pity and more of respect, came in its place, for the woman whom the world had cast out.

The man stepped to the desk, laid down the money, and that strange pair arose at once and separately went away from the court-room. John walked directly to his hotel. He looked for papers of the evening before; and in "*The World*," he read, amid "police court news," this blasting curse on an innocent man :

"John Hardhand; arrested for larceny from his employers, North & Co. number —— Worth street. The evidences of guilt seem indisputable. He is probably good for a term on the Island. It is a very alarming fact that this sort of peculation is becoming quite frequent in the dry goods district, and arrests of this sort will have a tendency to put a check to it."

John's face lost all its color. His lips changed to a gray color. His bedroom was turning dark, though the sun shone brightly outside and into the room; for

the window-shade was raised nearly to the window top.

He reached weakly for the key, and locked the door lest some one should come in and see him, down. The flesh beneath his nails turned blue. His extremities prickled like the numbness of a "foot asleep." He thought he was dying; and he really wished he might be. He fell back onto the bed and groaned aloud.

"Ah," he thought, "how many eyes have fallen on that blackening poison administered to the name of an innocent man. The newspaper exchanges will sow the nettles. The Scarborough *Herald* will herald to all my friends the story of shame. Oh, dear mother! Oh, good Thetty! how I wish I might have died before this fate reached me, and so spared you the agony and sorrow and shame of it."

CHAPTER XIX.

IN DISGRACE. BUSINESS FAILURE. A PRAYER FOR LIFE.

THE clerk at Earle's was an exceedingly genial, kind-hearted fellow. He was especially friendly toward John, and had, without the asking, done him many kindnesses. The one particularly pleasant little room which John occupied had been a favor of the clerk. It was a front room, commanding a long view down the street, and, though it was small, was of convenient shape and had its little separate radiator and central drop gas-light; and yet the price was made no higher than for less convenient rooms in the rear. John and the clerk were most excellent friends.

The Saturday night after his arrest John noticed that the clerk was unusually reticent, and apparently embarrassed when he stopped for a moment as usual, to chat with him before going to his room.

"Terribly raw and uncomfortable out, to-day," said John.

"Yes," replied the clerk.

"Did you speak to the plumber about putting a new valve seat in my register, Charley?"

"No."

"Wasn't he in, to-day?"

"Don't know."

"It leaks badly, and the condense-water is wetting

the carpet," said John. Then there was a long silence, and the clerk broke it by saying :

"Your little room connects by a now-closed door with the adjoining larger room, and another party needs them both after this week, Mr. Hardhand—a family party of three persons. If you can find another place, so that we can have that room, it would be a favor to us."

John made no reply for a moment, and gazed curiously at the clerk, who immediately busied himself with his pen and ledger. John replied, "I will try to do so."

The clerk did not look up, but just nodded, and scratched away with his pen. John walked away.

Did Hardhand discover in this suddenly-developed need for his room a suggestion that they wished him to leave the hotel? Had some boarder whispered, as he entered the dining-room, "that is Hardhand, the fellow arrested for stealing from North & Co." And did another one say, "O yes, I saw an account of it in "*The World*." He has a sorry, shamefaced look, hasn't he? Isn't it funny? he's such a fine manly-looking fellow, too." Did Hardhand in his supersensitive state *imagine* this? Was he only suspicious of the ban under which men seemed to put the man accused of theft? Was the burden of a clouded name really pressing him farther down? Be that as it may, he went in search of lodgings and succeeded in finding them. He at once engaged board in a middle-class, private boarding-house, kept by a bright, energetic, hardworking little widow, who had learned from experience that if she would keep her rooms and table filled with boarders, she must not be over-particular in searching out their

previous history ; she must keep her rates low ; she must buy carefully and attend to all the economies. She must also pay the one hundred and twenty-five dollars rent monthly in advance or leave the place and seek some other opportunity herself. Consequently she accepted any of respectable appearance who came, and retained them so long as they behaved decently at the table and about the house. John Hardhand was too honorable to assume another name, or to offer himself under an alias in the business of other men. Too sensitive to go to strangers and attempt to explain away such cruelly convincing evidence as had been brought against him. In his helpless disgrace, he was thrown back on his own puny financial resources. And he made the old and continually repeated mistake of starting, without experience, in a mercantile business for himself. In due time, John's case was called in the court of special sessions. The witnesses from North's were much more uncertain as to facts and materials of evidence than they were in the police court ; much to the annoyance of the ambitious young district attorney. Mr. North did not press the case ; all the circumstantial evidence of the calico, the wrapper and the closet were brought out, but the personal testimony of the carpenter and the detective did not support it with the former force. John, after being indicted, was on final trial acquitted. The district attorney was vexed and disappointed. While the law had released its grip on John, the cloud was not removed, indeed seemed to be darker, and the dawn of the day of truth further than ever away. The strange man and woman sat in the court-room on the day of the acquittal. The bail money was returned to the man, and the two walked

quietly out of court before John had an opportunity to thank them. John went out into the world, as a heedless person might say, free again. But was he free?

He had spent considerable money in payment of lawyers' fees and other legal expenses. With the remnant of his little hoard,—only a few hundred dollars,—he rented a small store for which he paid a large price. He bought a stock of goods which, with his "spot cash," were obtained for a small sum. Then with his little capital, and less experience, but absolute honesty, he entered the field of commercial competition, against great capital, long experience, all the questionable business tricks, decoys and cunning of the craft of "good business men." He struggled in the vicissitudes of trade against all these odds, lost his last dollar, and at the end of fourteen months after his arrest as a thief, John Hardhand, without money, without ownership or legal right to stand on any least scrap of this earth, without possession or legal right to any opportunity to work and produce the necessities of life, found himself out of business, out of money, and out of employment. He was not predisposed to suicide. He was a land animal; a big hearty fellow with a stomach. In soliloquizing and pondering these things in his mind, John found himself in a most cheerless state. If he did not exactly fancy death by starvation, he might beg his bread, or must steal it, or else he must beg and obtain some other man's permission to use *his* earth, or opportunity; in a word, permission to *work* for *him*, on such terms as the more fortunate owner of earth and opportunities, might graciously choose to make, if John asked it with that proper humility which both "John's station"

and “the respect due to their different stations in life” should alike commend his dependent body and soul.

For the first time, John Hardhand, now thought of the unnatural and incongruous aspect of such conditions. He now realized that, though, in all the fervor of a devout Christian faith, he might pray to the Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth ; might turn to the promises of God and read for the comfort of his soul, “The Earth he hath given unto ‘all’ the children of men for a possession ;” yet he knew now that he, Farmer John, might not use nor possess a square inch of earth nor any opportunity or possibility of life, unless he humbly prayed some landlord almighty, and gained his consent, by first making a bargain with him, as to the price of *permission to live on this earth* that does not belong to the Lord God nor to John Hardhand, but, to the *human lord of the land*, maker and keeper of seals and title-deeds and all the power that in them is, over the earth and the air and the sea that beats upon *his* shores, world without end.

CHAPTER XX.

SCALES FALLING FROM THE EYES OF THE BLIND. HUMAN
POVERTY AND NATURE'S BOUNTY.

DURING the two years that he had lived in New York, John had grown in experience, intelligence, and manhood. He was thinner in flesh, but with the alertness of a naturally active mind, stimulated to rapacity for gathering facts and weighing them, which had been developed by a hungering soul and a needy body, he had learned more of the way of life than he would have learned in twenty years on the Sconset farm. Not in body, but in soul and mind and manhood, John Hardman had grown immeasurably. He had caught a clearer view of the magnificent *purpose* of life, and of the difference between the way and the purpose.

Over the depths of his thought, which depths were now almost profound, hung such an aspect and spirit of sadness that its pathos wooed the curious, and won the respect of all persons who came under the influence of his presence. He felt thoroughly convinced of something wrong and unnatural in the present social conditions, although he did not clearly see the causes nor the remedy for them. He was saddened by the knowledge of conditions which tempted, invited, coaxed, yea sometimes forced, men to greed, selfishness and crime ; to madly seek unjust advantage of their fellow-men. He knew and understood the pressure and strain of

lives made hard, bitter and almost conscienceless by the pinch of poverty and by the power of great riches. No embruted man, woman or little child of the crowded city slums was so vile as not to win his deepest sympathy and pity. He saw and in his inmost heart he knew, now, that had *he* been born or forced into such surroundings, under such influences and desperation of impoverishment to soul and body as he had witnessed, that he would have been as brutal a man, as shameless a woman, as unchildlike a child. At the corner of Bayard and Mulberry streets, one day—that place so pitiful and ghastly in its squalor of misery—he stood still with overwhelming anguish, gazing after a little, frightened, shrinking child, pursued by a brutal mother, as it ran past him out of an alley and with terrified face dodged about among the push-carts of the venders of fish and vegetables that lined the curb and filled the street. Great tears came into his eyes, and he felt a strong impulse to catch up the little creature in his arms, and hug it for very pity, in all its nakedness and dirt. Four or five years old it was ; a child of a scion of sunny, God-favored Italy. Italy, home of the arts, thought John ; Italy, erstwhile queen of the world ; seat of the Christian Church ; scene, once, of the highest civilization. And in the bitterness of his soul he said, “has Nature grown niggardly toward her children in material gifts ? Are God’s children, now, created of meaner stuff, of meaner soul ? Is this the *work of God* or the *choice of men* ? No ! ” he soliloquized. “ Ah, no, it can be neither. Then what else can have wrought this embruting of men, but the errors of men, the *mistakes of human government* ? No rational man, with eyes, and hands, will want, or starve for that which the earth

offers him, if he is not in some way shut out from opportunity to make use of the earth and in the sweat of his brow eat bread." John earnestly asked himself, "Is there not *some* way to right this wrong?"

My dear reader, if you can do so some June day, when the grass-sparrows sing, when a blue sky smiles down, and soft flower-perfumed breezes blow over the millions of rich broad acres of unused land on this fair continent, walk leisurely through Bayard, Hester, Mulberry and similar streets of the great Metropolitan City of America, and then say,—if you can, of those human creatures you will see there—mortals it will break your heart to see,—"It is their own fault! They need not be dishonest; they need not be wicked and miserable. Why don't they do as I do, as some others do?"

Just *open the gates*, my brother, and let them into the fields where the sparrows sing, and the skies smile, and the warm earth says, "Come, labor with me, that every good thing, every blessing may spring up at your demand; (that which the fondling hand of labor brings forth from my bosom, the bosom of Mother Earth, is yours, my child)." Just try that God-provided way, and see how long want will pinch and embrute the lives and souls of such as these. Passing down through Bayard Street from the Bowery to Mulberry Street and thence through "the bend" to Worth Street, one June day, John had counted in this walk of three blocks, eighty-three children with no clothing, but a short shirt and a coat of dirt; thirteen haggard, half-dressed women, huddled in corners and alley-ways, nursing naked babies; saw uncounted women, mothers and maids going about clothed only with a ragged chemise and dirty skirt; amid such a jam of shouting,

cursing, wretched people; venders' carts laden with decaying vegetables and fruits or stale fish, and dark red, suspicious-looking meat; venders of old cast-off clothing. So much of this as to fill both sidewalks and the street from curb to curb. A team could not drive through it at all; and to even walk through it was a slow and very difficult task. The stench of stale food stuffs, and the horrible gutter smell was an air to turn the stomach of even so stout a man as he. Odors so vile as to almost make him wish the nose had been left out of the human anatomy. And he pondered the relation of these things to society, and said, alas, into such conditions are born daily hundreds of little children. Here are the mothers of citizens of the republic. Here is the man whose vote and voice in the direction of government and civilization has just as indisputable a right, and just as potent force as mine or any other; in a republic in which he is guaranteed the right to vote, and the right to work (for somebody else if he obtains their permission) or to sell himself, or beg, or steal, or starve. And yet we deceitfully try to blind our eyes to this curse and presage of disaster, and to shirk responsibility by saying, "It is their fault," when we know better. It is because we dare not say it is God's fault, that we say it is theirs. It is because of our own careless, selfish, indifferent neglect that we are ashamed to confess what we know to be true; that *the fault is our own*.

On Sunday,—that one day which the workingman can call his own—Sunday mornings particularly, John had many times walked through this pitiful district on the East Side, and anon after his two o'clock dinner, had sauntered over to Washington Square and thence

to "The Park," Central Park, through Fifth Avenue, at that hour of the day when prancing steeds and clanking silver or gilded pole chains and glittering coaches with liveried lackeys filled the street. When beauty and culture and dignity and pugs and pride were on parade. He had often ridden on the Ninth Avenue elevated railroad, swung round the great Harlem curve, and gazed off thoughtfully over the hundreds of empty acres there, where the sun shone and the free wind of heaven was pouring over them life-giving air, for the need of which little babes of the poor were gasping, and dying like flies. Then he had thought of that down-town, east side crush of mortals, crowded like snarling beasts who are driven onto a flood-girt island growing hourly smaller by the rising tide. He had been a quiet but most earnest student of various phases of human life, of human laws, social customs, principles of right, and systems of government. He had associated more or less with kindred thoughtful persons, and had been a listener at public meetings in Cooper Union Hall, and the Academy of Music. He had been a member of an organization for intelligent reformation of the popular mind, which had for its chief motto the one phrase, "Be just." Yes, John Hardhand had grown deep and tender, broad and serious.

CHAPTER XXI.

AGAIN, THE SEARCH FOR WORK. THE OBSTACLE TO MARRIAGE.
O, SAM!—O, JOHN!

JOHN's venture in business for himself with a small capital,—as is usual,—had resulted in reducing him to the position of a man with no capital. It became immediately necessary that he should obtain employment and secure an income.

"The man who wants a chance," again searched for work. His aspirations, however, were not so high as formerly. As he came down the steps of his boarding-house one morning a little after seven, he saw Sam Saunders across the way, and, stepping rapidly, soon overtook him, walked to Broadway and on down town in his company. Sam was employed at North's as a bookkeeper when John was there, and the two had been very good friends. Sam had defended his name among the men and never for a moment believed John had purloined the missing bolt of calico. He had often said, he believed it was "a put-up job on John to get him out of some other man's way," and had more than once confidentially hinted to John his belief that Shorty knew something about it.

Sam was now keeping the books for a cartridge manufacturing company at their office in Broadway near Reade Street.

"How are you getting on, Sam?" asked John, after they had shaken hands, and skipped into step.

"Much better than I did at North's, I can tell you that," said Sam. "I have not bettered myself in the matter of salary, but I am out of the strifes and intrigues and petty jealousies of that great house. I am quite alone in the office where I am now, and have nothing to constantly vex and worry me in my new place, so I am getting fat, don't you see?" and he puffed out a little in pardonable pride over his slightly-aldermanic figure.

"How is the little Harlem girl, Sam, that you used to take so regularly every six weeks to see Erminie, and to the Church fairs and all that?"

"I have given her up."

"What! given her up? And you getting eighteen dollars a week? I thought you were engaged and had given her a token ring?"

"I am not getting eighteen dollars a week, nor fourteen. I am getting just twelve. I never did get the eighteen dollars but about four months, at North's, and then a young Frenchman, friend of their Paris buyer, an excellent scholar in both languages, came over, anxious to learn their American business, and offered to work the first year for nothing. Before he had been at the books four months, they put him in my department, gradually took the work off my hands and put it into his, then cut down my pay, and finally gave me notice to leave. Timens told me the other day, that they were allowing the Frenchman eight dollars a week now, which he spends perhaps, for cigars and the theater. He gets an annuity from his father at home in Paris; I suppose his father is rich."

"But what about Ada, Sam?"

"O, we have struck a balance, passed checks, and closed the account."

"Sam!" ejaculated John, with an exclamation of astonishment.

"Yes," he replied.

"What was the matter? No quarrel, surely."

"No! No! Ada would never quarrel, and no one could ever quarrel with her if they tried. If ever at any time I felt worried and waspish and spoke carelessly, a cross word to her, the pitifully grieved look that came into her face would make me hate myself. I would instantly feel like getting onto my knees for forgiveness, yet I need only to put out my hand in regret toward her to scatter the clouds and bring joy again to us both. Those were the bitterest quarrels we ever had. Ada, quarrel; Oh, no."

"Very well, Sam. You don't mind telling me, do you, what drove you apart?"

"It was because I was too darned poor, John. It was not so much her fault as mine. I have been a hum-drum bookkeeper all these years. I don't know anything else. I have not got what they call 'business gumption,' nor experience enough to safely go into business for myself, nor capital if I had the experience. I have just got to remain a bookkeeper. Bookkeepers are plenty and wages are low. My promotion will be backward—at least, so far as salary is concerned—though it may be forward in responsibility and work. Twelve dollars does not safely provide for a home and a wife these times, and children perhaps. There is no use in my struggling after the dreams of home. Men like myself have no business to marry. I gave Ada up four months ago." Then he was silent for a time, and

finally continued, "There is another idol in the niche where I used to sit, now, I believe."

"What do you mean?" said John.

"I mean that she is courted now by another fellow ; proprietor of a liquor store, with a pool-room attachment. He can furnish her with a most comfortable home, and fine clothes and opera-seats and all that."

"Don't you hate him?"

"I did, but I don't any more. I was bound I would not. I go very often to his place in the evening. We are most excellent friends. His pool-tables are free to me. After all he is a real good fellow, we play pool together and smoke and chat. I never drink at all, you know ; neither does he, as strange as that seems. I can't blame him, nor I can't blame Ada. Yes, we are the best of friends."

"How does Ada happen to be so fickle?"

"I didn't say she was fickle. I don't say she likes this new fellow better than she liked me. I don't know. I never see her now. I could never marry her ; I am too poor. He can marry her, and that's all there is about it."

John said bitterly, "Oh, Sam!"

Sam inquired about John's present relation to Thetty. They had been friendly confidants while working together at North's, and so John detailed matters in regard to Thetty and himself, to which Sam listened attentively, then added sarcastically, "Oh, John!" They dropped the subject at once.

"Do you know, Sam, of any chance for me to get a position anywhere, at anything?"

"No, I don't," answered the bookkeeper ; "I wish I did."

"Here, take my present address." He penciled it upon a piece of envelope and handed it to Sam.

"Good-bye, John. Drop into the office and see me sometimes when you are passing by."

"I will. Good-bye."

Sam turned into the office of his employers, and John strode on. For two days he continued his anxious search. He must pay his board bill, now overdue, and had exactly forty-two cents, no more, on this third day of his tramp, his birthday also. He had a cent for each year of his life, and the lucky odd eleven cents beside with which to celebrate the anniversary day of his birth. Bitter thoughts and a feeling of almost reckless desperation came over him.

"I am about ready to do anything," thought John ; "to take any chance job that is offered ; from cutting a throat, down to being a lackey ; down to wearing top-boots, white close-fitting knee-pants, a pompon on the side of my hat and to sit riding backward with folded arms on the tail-board of an English village-cart."

Just a little after noon, he dropped in at a fashionable restaurant up-town to ask for any work they might have for him to do ; anything at all. Perhaps they might need a fireman in the boiler-room ? The proprietor, Mr. Boniface, was a genial and kindly man. He was also a most excellent reader of character from the faces and manners of men. John pleased him, and he said, "I think we," he always said we, "can do something for you. How would you like the position of usher, in this place ?" And he gazed off down into the fairyland deeps of the restaurant with a pardonable look of pride.

"Well, I don't know," John replied hesitatingly.

"It would be quite new work for me, though neither hard nor difficult since it seems to be only the work of attentive assistance to strangers and the common natural courtesies that are due to everybody."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Boniface, with good-natured satisfaction; and he laid his hand confidently on John's arm; "that's it, exactly. You will do. And I assure you that for a person of your presence and manners, the 'tips' in this place are a regular little gold mine. You don't need any salary from me at all."

John was perfectly mystified by this strange nonsense and looked innocently foolish; for he thought Boniface was making game of him; and it seemed unlike the man.

Hardhand made a frank explanation of his financial standing, and Mr. Boniface said to him promptly, "I will give you four dollars a week and board, and you may keep all your tips."

"Can't I do some of the work?" asked John.

"Oh, no," said the restaurateur, "you have no experience at restaurant work, and for cooks and carvers and the like, I have to hire experienced people here, you know. I shall occasionally send you out with a catering party, to clubs or to private dinners, not as Chef, ha, ha,—but to generally oversee, look out for crooked work, look after ushers and the general detail of the service. There is good money for you in jobs of that sort."

John did not like the thought of this "tip system." He had seen a little of it, and he loathed it naturally, for he was by nature a gentleman. "Now, if you turn out here as well," continued Mr. Boniface, "as I think you will, I will let you in on those catering jobs, and you will do finely." John hesitated.

"Well, what do you say?"

"I would like to think it over a while."

"Oh, if you don't want it, say so, and I will put an advertisement for an usher, in the papers as I had intended to do. I must know before eight o'clock to-night."

"I will give you an answer before that time, and if I determine not to accept your offer I will take your advertisement down to the office myself in time for insertion."

John went hurriedly out, tramped about town for the remainder of the afternoon without success, and yet could not bring his mind to take such a lackey's employment as Boniface offered. Shortly after six o'clock he returned to the restaurant and told the proprietor that he feared he could not properly fill the position. The man hastily wrote out an advertisement for the newspapers, counted the words, handed the copy and the exact change to pay for its publication to John, also handing him an extra quarter dollar. John shoved the quarter directly back saying, "What's that for?"

"Why, that is all right," said Boniface.

"But did you not do me the kindness to await my answer?" said John, "and can I not be permitted to return the courtesy by doing for you this little favor, without pay? It is no trouble at all to me, it takes me right past my boarding-place, and I have nothing else to do."

Mr. Boniface replied at the same time forcing the quarter into his hand, "My dear man, you are too thin-skinned for business. When money floats your way, don't let it float by."

John passed out of the place in great mental com-

motion. He already owed for one week's board. In passing his boarding-house, he dropped in to leave his umbrella which, without need for use, he had carried all day. The grateful odor of dinner came up from the dining-room below, and he heard the pleasant chatter of table talk, but he hesitated only a moment, and was rapidly starting away, when the little landlady came through the hall and with a wicked laughing twinkle in her eyes, said, to him, "What's your hurry, Mr. Hard-hand? Go down and get your supper. You need not worry so much over that one week's board. I wish I had no bigger losses than that to count, though you should never pay it. Go down and get your supper."

"But, my dear woman," he replied, "I am not going to longer freely eat your food; I've had too much of it now. I want to pay for what I eat and so eat my own food; and I have not a dollar in the world nor any certainty of getting one." He hurried out of the door and down the street toward the "World Office," at a furious pace, but before he had walked a block, he turned quickly on his heel and as rapidly walked back to the restaurant which he had left but twenty minutes before.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE GENTLEMANLY USHER. A CHAPTER ON "TIPS."

ENTERING "Tony's Restaurant" breathing deeply, flushed from his rapid walk, and smiling, John Hardhand came up to the office desk and good-humoredly laughed, as he handed to Mr. Boniface the advertisement, the money to pay for it, and the extra quarter and said to him, "Here is the advertisement copy, and here is the money for carrying it down. I have come back without publishing the advertisement, to answer it myself, if you think I will be able to meet the requirements."

"Very well; I guess we will try you," the good-natured *restaurateur* laughingly replied. He smiled at the humor of John's sudden change of mind; he laughed, in sympathy with the happy resignation to his fate which shone in John's face, and which gave a ring of gladness to every tone of his voice. Boniface was a sympathetic man, happy in seeing others happy, and John's change from anxious care to happy contentment was so complete.

We are overwhelmed with terror of anxiety, as round after round in the ladder of our ambitions breaks under us, and we go whirling over and over downward. Having reached the bottom,—having found that though a few arms, legs, or ribs are broken, we are not killed

after all,—the worst that was feared and could have happened has not happened, we rejoice. Our nerves are benumbed with the shock; acute sensibility of the disaster has not yet been aroused to torture us with the pain of our injuries. We are glad—happy. Laugh, because we are alive.

Mr. Boniface proceeded to explain to John minutely, what his duties would be; and afterward asked him to step into the dining-room for dinner. John Hardhand was a fine-looking, tidily dressed man, and very interesting also in conversation. He had seen enough of hotel life, to know how to order a dinner properly; no mean accomplishment, if you please. Boniface came in, sat down at a table near by, and while John was giving his order to the waiter, said to him, "Come over to this table, Hardhand, and dine with me."

An amusing thing that, for a master to say to his man; but this man John was innocently unfamiliar with the strained exactions of social etiquette, and so, promptly enough, accepting the invitation, came over and sat down with Mr. Boniface at his table. The latter handed him the menu card, and, with an amusing look which John was quick to notice, said, "Order for two." John caught at the chance, and saw a way in it to lessen the distance between himself and his employer. He began with the "Blue Points," and went on down through the menu, as the meal progressed, with the ease and nonchalance of an old gourmet. Each item in proper time and regular order, neither stopping nor hesitating at anything but the wine list. And each time asking the choice of Mr. Boniface, while he also ordered to suit his own taste. Mr. Boniface ordered a small

bottle of Sauterne, which they drank between them, for John would not obnoxiously refuse, and strain a point which was more a point of taste than a point of morals with him. He graciously sipped his wine with the food, and for the hour, forgetting all differences in their station, the two men sat eating leisurely, and chatting in a quiet, pleasant way. Both enjoyed the dinner exceedingly well. The walls and ceiling were decorated in relief work and the softest, most delicate tints in color; elegant tapestries were gracefully draped at the windows and opened doors. Brilliant electric lights from myriads of little globes lighted up the polished oak of the furniture and the snowy linen of a score of separate tables. The silver and china and cut-glass shone and sparkled. Deep-pile axminster carpets made noiseless the steps of guests and of waiters as they went to and fro. So deft at their work were these full-dressed attendants that no noise of silver or rattling dish was heard at all. Ah, the waiter indeed was a marvel. Saw, without seeming to see. Knew, without seeming to watch when a course was done and another course should come on. Stood near at hand without eyes or ears, apparently not in the least attentive; yet heard everything, saw everything, knew your every need even before you had expressed it. Slid the chair gently under you as you sat down, and drew it cautiously away when you arose from the table. He looked like a very Prince Imperial. A truly wonderful man.

John noticed that occasionally a waiter would place his hand on a table corner, from which a guest had but just lifted his own hand; that if the proprietor chanced to be looking that way, the waiter appeared solemn and dumb; that if Mr. Boniface was looking away, or had

his back turned toward him, the waiter smiled at the guest ; the guest sometimes smiled, sometimes frowned ; but the waiter thereafter invariably showed greater assiduity in serving the guest with the best and with wonderful alacrity, after that laying down and picking up of hands.

John kept his room at the boarding-house, but came early next morning to his new work. He was immediately introduced into a full-dress suit, and told that his linen must be of immaculate whiteness and his shoes well polished. His wavy brown hair, now slightly sprinkled with gray, was always kept neatly combed, so that was not mentioned. His mustache, brown and glossy, curled naturally at the ends. But in this uniform he looked, too painfully distinguished to suit himself. The uncomfortable thought came to him at the moment, and he soliloquized, "How sneakingly humiliated I am. How miserably ashamed of myself I should feel, in this outfit, if I were to be confronted by dear old honest, ignorant Bartholomew McAuliffe."

"Attend to your work, Hardhand," said Boniface to him, a little sharply ; and John graciously bowed, to the gentleman and lady just passing under the tapestry portières of the archway entrance into the dining-rooms. He took the gentleman's coat, hat and cane, and the lady's wrap, put them together, where he could instantly find and return them when the couple should leave the breakfast-room. He preceded them down into the great dining-halls, turned them over to a waiter, and returned to his post.

Their breakfast was a hurried one, and as they came out they asked for a New Haven R. R. time-table. John

promptly brought one from the time-table rack in the telegraph room. He assisted the man in putting on his coat, and then, in the most courteous manner, laid the lady's wrap over her shoulders. He had placed an extra time-table on the stand beside him while he was busy with his hands, and now that he was disengaged, he turned to pick it up and return it to the rack again. A silver half dollar was resting on it ; he covered it up with his hand and with a horrible sense of shame, put it in his pocket—out of sight. The gentleman had laid it there for him. Now, the man was gone beyond his recall ; and indeed, how should he pay the little widow her board bill, how pay his room rent and these expensive laundry bills, if he refused to accept "tips?"

As John was not exactly a waiter, they did not, or rather they could not, require him to join the Waiters' Union, and come under rules and tribute as to service and "tips ;" but he stood on such unusually good terms with the proprietor, that they were suspicious and jealous of him, and made open complaint of this man who was, as they thought, made a sort of imported foreign governor-general of their little native colony. Boniface heard the complaints and foresaw the possibly evil consequences of being too fraternal with Hardhand. He was thereafter more reserved, and had little to say to John but to give him directions and orders occasionally.

There were many regular patrons at this fashionable restaurant, wealthy people, enjoying a rest from their own establishments and the care of servants in other cities. People who came to New York, rented an elegant suite of rooms and took their meals regularly

at "Tony's," as the restaurant of Mr. Anthony Boniface was familiarly called.

John Hardhand's face and welcome soon became familiar and pleasing to them, and their "tips" amounted to a considerable sum. John paid the board bill to the widow, also the room rent for a month in advance, and he had a few dollars beside. But he hated the dollars that came in such a way, and with each one he felt his manhood going down. Fifty dollars was immediately needed up at mother's on the Sconset farm. He had saved forty-four. One day as he stepped to open the coach door and help into it a pompous customer, the puffy old fellow stuck his sour face out at the window and threw out a little handful of nickels and dimes, with one quarter. John's face was scarlet with shame and anger. How he would have rejoiced to throw them back into the coach—but it was gone. He—shame-faced—picked up the dimes and the quarter, and some scampering gamins readily appropriated the remainder. One of the little fellows rolled up one of his dangling sleeves and having picked up three of the nickels, made haste to offer them to John. The latter gave him the quarter-dollar and told him to keep the nickels also. The lad gave another roll up to the sleeves of the man-sized old coat he wore, hitched up the ragged old pants which were far too long for him and were also rolled up, and having relieved his emotions by uttering the expression, "Huly Gee," ran down the street and was out of sight in a moment.

Every day, sometimes many times in the day, John was insulted, and then handed a coin, by some patron of the place. And again when he had simply given that kindly courtesy to which his nature inclined him,

to some guest of pleasing appearance, some person whom John desired should respect him, he was cut to the heart when such a guest facetiously handed him money. As if he knew that John's smiles and kindly fraternities were for sale ; and by the fact and manner of giving, said plainly enough, "Here is the price." He was sent to take charge of the catering for an evening entertainment by an up-town club. The wine-list was especially patronized, for they were a wealthy party of sons of the "better classes." Several roistering young fellows had to be helped to their carriages, as the hours rolled on toward morning. One man in a particularly boisterous and lugubrious state, one who had ordered "extra dry" until he had become wine-soaked and extra-wet ; who had sown money around as only a dunce, drunk or sober, would do. He had by his own request been lifted by John and actually carried to the coach which had called for him at the door. Two bright, well-dressed, painted and powdered but otherwise physically beautiful women, awaited him with the coach, and they tittered with pleasant amusement as they helped to steady him back into his seat. John closed the coach door, the driver whipped around the corner, and they were gone. As John started to run up the steps of the club house, he found a great rumpled, wine-wet roll of bank-notes at the foot of the stairs. He knew at once that the money had fallen out of the young man's pockets, and made thorough inquiry and all possible effort to learn who he was ; but no one of the maudlin party had even the most shadowy recollection of the man. John never learned, though he tried diligently, spent ten dollars of the money in efforts to discover the owner of the lost money, and only

succeeded in finding three or four fraudulent claimants, who, in answer to John's advertisements, clumsily tried to personate him. There were three hundred and thirty-four dollars in the roll, of which John deposited three hundred and twenty-four dollars in a savings bank, leaving it there in the hope of finding its rightful owner; though he never did.

One day, as John was coming to his work, he saw Mr. Lord, with grip-sack and umbrella just entering "Tony's." A young man accompanied him whom John had seen at Scarborough, but whom he was not able to recall by name. Then he noticed another stranger passing, with a familiar Scarborough face, and noted the fact that it was barely past the time of arrival for the early train which made a stop at Sconset. Suddenly, a man in farmer-like "Sunday-clothes" accosted him in glad, hearty tones,

"Yerra, John Hardhand, me gud mon, an' how air ye?"

It was Jimmy McGurk, from Sconset. He caught John's offered hand and heartily shook it. Still holding it shook it again and again as they asked and answered a score of questions, and John gathered the Sconset news. In mentioning this episode to his mother, a few months later, John told her he felt inclined to take off his hat to old Jimmy, feeling himself so much the man's inferior. And that if it had chanced to be Mr. Bartholomew McAuliffe instead of Jimmy, he should have been tempted to get down on his knees; or worse, if Old Bat had discovered him in his uniform and wearing his custom-made smile, he thought he should have dropped down and rolled in the dirt like an humble dog, before a man so much

more honorable and manly than himself. John was a little extreme in his self-abnegation over this episode in his life, for it was so unnatural to him, that he called it "dirty work."

After leaving Jimmy, John entered the restaurant. While he was in the dressing-room putting on his full dress-suit, Mr. Lord ate a little fruit, finished his cup of coffee and omelette hastily, and with his companion was just passing out of the restaurant door, much to John's relief, as he came into the dining-room.

Two weeks after this occurrence, the little District Attorney came in to "Tony's" and greeted Mr. Boniface with the familiar air of an old acquaintance. John blushed and showed unmistakable confusion as the bright little man nodded to him and John preceded the man through the dining-room. Before the lawyer had finished his meal, Mr. Boniface stepped over to his table, and the two sat chatting together. John was much annoyed by this, and felt confident that the lawyer had told Mr. Boniface of his arrest and trial in the criminal court. John took the very first opportunity after the lawyer left to go to Boniface and explain to him as far as possible, "the mystery of the stolen calico." Mr. Boniface admitted that the attorney had mentioned the affair, and had expressed astonishment that "Tony" had not recalled to memory the newspaper reports of it.

When John had completed his detailed explanation, Mr. Boniface said to him, "Now, Hardhand, this is a most unfortunate thing for both you and myself. I want to say to you frankly, however, that I don't believe you are guilty, and that I do believe you have been wronged; despite all the lawyer has said. I don't often

mistake an honest face, and I have put your honesty to the test here many times, in ways you know nothing of and at times when you could not know a detection was possible ; and you were true to your trust. But that is not the only thing to be considered. I cannot without serious harm to my business have a man about my place who has been once indicted for theft, even though he has been acquitted. The news of accusation and indictment for crime flies with the wind, like a prairie fire, but the news of *acquittal* has no interest for the public ear, and crawls along in a leisurely doubtful way, never getting far from home. Customers here will say to each other, if they do not to me, ‘Why does Boniface keep that sleek-looking, meek-looking thief in his place?’ I am sorry, John, I am, indeed, that it is so, but you will have to go. I will do anything in reason that I can to help you, in any place, but to keep you here.”

John held out his hand to Mr. Boniface who grasped it earnestly. Mr. Boniface held his hand long, and pressed it in hearty sympathy. After a moment of thought, John said to him, “You are right. I must go, and it is better so. I thank you, my friend, for your sympathy. I need it, and still more do I thank you for your faith in my honesty. Some day I may prove it to you.”

“To me it is proved already, my dear fellow,” cheerily replied the kind-hearted man.

That night Mr. Boniface cast John’s account. There was three weeks undrawn salary due him, for the “tips” had been much more than enough for John’s needs. Mr. Boniface gave him him the twelve dollars and then, picking out a crisp new twenty-dollar bill

reached it to him and said pleasantly, "Take that from me, with my best wishes for your future good luck."

"No," said John, "I cannot accept charity. I must earn my money and take only my own, to enjoy its use. The 'tips' have already made me a miserable man. I want what is right and just. I made my bargain with you; you have paid me."

"But, my dear man," said "Tony," "you must let people help you in charity when you are so wronged that you cannot help yourself."

"Oh," said Hardhand, "it is so weakening, Mr. Boniface, and so humiliating to accept and get to expect charity, that in a little time it takes all the manhood and ambition out of a man and leaves him a moral wreck."

"Well, then, let us call this twenty dollars, your share of the profits of 'The Century Club' catering contract; and it yet leaves me five times as much for myself, which is very good pay for my part of the work and the use of my capital for a couple of weeks; there," and he shoved the bill into his hand. John folded it and put it into his pocket. They shook hands again and he walked out of "Tony's" and away from his chance to obtain a living, and to financially prosper by receiving "tips," in reward for favors and common courtesies.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AGAIN "AT SEA." THE ONLY PORT OPEN TO THE MAN FROM NO-LAND.

THE three hundred and twenty-four dollars for which John had found no owner, still lay in the savings bank, subject to his order. But he felt that it had better remain there. It was not wealth of his production. He had sent the fifty dollars to his mother, in Sconset, and now with this new twenty-dollar bill and his wages added to his savings, he had sixty-two dollars all told and his room rent paid for a time in advance. Yet the cloud was hanging over his name; and a sense of shame, because of this last and meanest employment, although he was driven to the necessity of accepting it, yet these facts of his life-history oppressed and discouraged him. He had little heart of hope to further try his fortunes in New York, the seat of his troubles and repeated failures. He spent three days in idle waiting, to gather his mental and moral forces and to think out a plan for his future; resolving to go home to his mother in Scarborough for a day and then again return to the great City.

The little widow, proprietor of the boarding-house, tried to cheer and encourage him to further effort in New York. He shook his head doubtfully and said to her, "No; I have thought it over carefully, and have determined to go to Scarborough, and, if I can, get

work as a mechanic in some one of the factories there. A name is of little consequence to the man who attends a machine, a number will do as well."

There were reasons and tendencies drawing him there that John himself hardly knew; yet they affected his decision; then, too, Thetty, and mother and home were near, and at Scarborough was a chance to do some good for others; to plant and cultivate some lasting truths. I presume such desire is the natural consequence of suffering, such as John had passed through. Self-sacrificing martyrs are made in that way. It is so the world has been redeemed. The highest inspirations of human life; Gethsemane and the resurrection.

John went to Scarborough and succeeded in getting employment in the Opolee mills. Proctor and Paul had been working at another Scarborough factory now for nearly a year. Proctor was married and Paul was likely to be quite soon. John had himself surrendered the hope of marriage, and resigned himself to the fate of a factory life and the duty of helping his mother. He had another duty, too, to seek the cause for the social injustice he observed and from which he suffered—the duty to interest, so far as he could, others to think also, and seek to correct the fundamental mistake if it could be found.

He did not call on Thetty, now. He crucified himself for her sake, as he supposed, and drank vinegar mixed with gall. Theoretta Vick was a jewel of her sex, but not yet quite an angel. She was a bright, good woman, that was all; with an appetite, and need for food. With all pardonable womanly pride for dress, with sweet little vanities for gloves and lace and all

those little dainties of adornment that so add to woman's pleasurable presence and make her desirable. With exquisite taste for artistic little refinements, etchings, flowers, home decorations, pretty dishes, tasteful furniture and furnishings. How much prettier for all this was she. How much sweeter and more enjoyable would this womanly jewel be, set amid such surroundings.

John's financial future looked rightly very hopeless to him. The suspicion of a miserable crime had not been cleared from his name. Time was passing. When he came home to his father's funeral, six months ago, that only visit to Sconset during this miserable year, he had insisted upon releasing Thetty from all obligation of her engagement to him. He had said to her, "I will not in my selfishness hold you to a promise made when my life was full of hope and promise. I positively refuse to cloud your name with the shadow of my name and drag you down to share my miserable dependence upon the choice or the caprice of the employers of men—of men who are entirely without the opportunity to employ themselves."

Good Father Hardhand, sickened in heart and body by the fruitless struggle, died, and left barely enough property to pay off the mortgage and keep the old house and four acres of the farm around it as a home for mother during her few years more of life. The mill-owners took the remainder. Paul, John and Proctor helped the dear widowed mother all they could. A Swedish farmer worked the old homestead farm, now property of the mill company; raised hay and oats to feed the mill mules and horses, and Jersey cows to furnish butter for the tables of the mill-owners.

A nephew of Mr. Lord, a bright and promising man, a sort of manager in the Opolee mills, was in love with Thetty Vick. He had that bright, jolly, happy air only possible to the prosperous man, and being good at heart, for he had had a good mother, his very presence was exhilarating, and his conversation bubbling over with good cheer. Everybody liked him. Thetty liked him—how could she help it? She just *liked* him very much ; that was all.

John's heart was so heavy that he longed to die. But he shunned Thetty and left the field to Captain Vance. Thetty herself felt piqued. She thought she knew that John's devotion to her could not after all have been equal to her love for him, or he would not have given her up so easily.

Captain Vance with all his bright future before him, with all his culture and delightful social equipments, and with his genuine love for Thetty, frankly avowed his love for her, since he knew her to be free, and asked her to become his wife. Thetty said, "Yes"? Ah, no indeed. Not so fickle as that, ah, no ; Thetty said, "Wait." And he waited.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE NEW SCARBOROUGH. LIGHTS AND SHADOWS. THE MEN WHO WORK. THE MEN WHO PERMIT MEN TO WORK.

In the snug little town of Scarborough, great distinctions in social life have grown up, quite unlike the kindly old-fashioned fraternity common when all were neighbors and distributed spare-ribs at "hog-killing time," or sent around kegs of cider and went all together to huskings and quiltings or to church. In the somewhat different present, a small and select number of the citizens, the first citizens, of Scarborough, live on "High Street, on the Hill," just back of the business streets and the noise and bustle and dust of work ; on the great high hill that is up in the air and sunlight and throws its shadow down over the fields of struggle, and somewhat darkens the fence corners, where starve the stalks of golden grain amid the weeds and worms, and bear such fruit as they can. What a pretty and promising world this is to the people on the hill. What a delightful view they get from the height and the sunlit side of the scene. The shadows are all thrown the other way and mostly out of sight. The apostles of "Well enough! Let well enough alone," live here ; naturally and quite properly here.

When a citizen of Scarborough walks through High Street, with a person strange to the place, you will see him point to an elegant brick and terra-cotta villa, and

say, "That is Mr. Opolee's house. He is the biggest mill-owner *we* have got. He's a millionaire; a very rich man." Or point to a fine graystone Queen Anne house with well-kept lawn and fountains and statues and say, "That is Mr. Lord's house. He is the wealthiest citizen we have in town." Or to a Moorish house of brick, stone and terra-cotta, with its barn and garden-house of Moslem style, crescents and minarets, and all that oriental stuff, and say, "That is a brother-in-law of the millionaire Mr. Opolee, who lives there. This is the great railroad man. He is said to be worth four or five millions." And so on, and so on. Very bright and pretty and interesting, isn't it?

I have lately heard a distasteful rumor—a rumor from those envious people who have always some harsh word to say of the rich and prosperous—I have heard from such uncertain source, such undeserving people, that these good persons on the hill are sometimes a little offensive in their assumption of superiority to the common lot of mortals, who "don't know enough to make money nor to take care of it if they get it." These well-to-do, rich fellows are said by silly workingmen, who simply know how to work and make things, to be "somewhat lordly in their conduct and carriage;—these rich fellows." And that they have proven their different clay, by their contemptuous regard for and their oppressive treatment of that great mass of Scarborough citizens who *work* directly and indirectly for the land-owners, and mill-owners, and railroad owners, and so on.

Now as these workingmen, who only know how to make things and don't know how to take things, are themselves made of just common earthy material and

water, you might as well say, in the indelicate slang of some notorious politicians, "their name is mud ;" and what are they going to do about it anyhow ? But these poor ignorant makers of things and producers of good goods *will persistently grumble* about their hard lot ; disturb the peace of society by public complaints, by organizations for defense of what they call their right to a living proportion of the wealth they produce ; and because they have been first struck and injured, claim the right, also, themselves, to strike back, at their good kind masters, who, in response, continually declare to the dependent workingmen that they, the masters, have only one purpose in building mills and letting land and managing railroads, and making laws, and that purpose is to "*give work*" and incidentally to give greater wages and increased comforts and luxuries to these silly, discontented workingmen, who could not, but for these masters, raise fruit, flower or grain from the earth nor make any good thing out of the materials of the earth. Still, as some of the politicians in their indelicate language have said, "the kickers keep kicking ;" and, greatest of pities, these common people, working people, shut their eyes, much as an enraged bull does when he starts towards you, and it is easy to dodge their onset ; and oftener they gore their friends than their foes.

It has been an usage in the village of Scarborough for more than a century, that the people occupy the town hall whenever they desire it, and when any considerable majority, not of riches, but of their numbers, approve. That is an established custom so cherished that the wise men on the hill do not dare innovate to stop it, though to stop it would spare them a deal of

trouble. For when people meet there, as they frequently do and will, to discuss popular affairs, they are certain to arouse unjust prejudice. "They always do," and much harmful gossip about the "lord" who permits them to use his land, and the great manufacturer who "permits them to work" for him, and indeed all those amiable fellows who have made this earth and all its opportunities and are therefore rightly entitled to the homage and service of those whom in merciful generosity and kindness they have permitted to work and live. One would suppose, when these workmen, these fellows, were repeatedly shown their dependence, which, by the way, they continuously seem to confess ; when they were told that these Scarborough mill-owners railroad owners and landlords "*gave work*" to more than nine thousand men, and that if these mills, etc., etc., etc., should in revenge for this unkind gossip, shut down and "*stop work*," that then, these nine thousand men, willing and anxious to work, would be likely to starve ; such facts should reduce them to contented resignation.

When it is so clearly detailed to Scarborough working-men that, but for the merciful kindness of their employers, they *would* starve ; starve for the very want of this work which those amiable employers are furnishing for them, one would suppose that that would at once close their ungrateful mouths forever about landlords, trusts, syndicates, monopolies, tariffs and all that ; but it does not, and I am afraid it never will. For the working producers of all wealth will never be quite satisfied that the primal of all right, power and authority is in the landlord. And just as the perplexing little child asks, "Well, who made Dod ?" so this larger child asks of the landlord,

"Who made you?" Upon which, the landlord, unless he is terribly agnostic, is likely to say, "God." And as some one has told that poor foolish workingman that God made *him*, and he has been so silly as to believe it, he will most certainly say to this lord of the land, "Goodness gracious, my long-lost brother!" And as our rich friend cannot deny the Fatherhood of God, nor the common motherhood of the earth's maternal bosom, nor even the universal brotherhood of man, I do not see how he can shake off these troublesome poor relations nor keep out of trouble with these too fraternal brothers unless he tears up the whole Divine order, upsets the entire physical universe, and rearranges creation to fit his incongruous relation to love and justice and truth.

That's a great work; too great. He really does not like work so very well after all. I do not want to mis-judge his benevolent motives, but perhaps it is because he does not prize work nor care particularly to keep it for his own use and enjoyment that he so generously "gives work" to the nine thousand Scarborough men, and puffs up a little with self-gratulation and vanity as he reminds them of his self-sacrificing generosity, while he takes good things which work produces; and he enjoys them exceedingly well.

CHAPTER XXV.

PESSIMISTS AND OPTIMISTS. LAST SCENES IN THE DRAMA OF FATHER HARDHAND'S LIFE. AN UNMORTGAGED BIT OF THE EARTH.

ALL the omens and trend of popular thought to-day, are full of hopeful promise and cheer. The person who carefully studies the object-lessons of the world's daily life, and notes the effect they are having upon the popular mind, will, in spite of all the misery and mistakes that abound, become an optimist. An op-ti-mist, because he will see shining through the miserable mists of the present, bright rays of dawning day. The certainly coming day when truth will be seen of all men and justice triumphantly take her seat.

The thorough student, who sees and knows what is coming must repress his joy a little and not too exuberantly shout, or he will be sneered at by the heedless and called a "visionary." Yesterday when he pointed to the misery of men and said it ought to be cured, the heedless called him a pessimist, and tried to shirk their share of the work by denying the truth and saying "things are not so bad as he paints. If we try to make things better we will be likely to make them worse. *Better leave things as they are.*"

To-day, when he pointed to a remedy for the evils whose existence the heedless denied only yesterday, they to-day will confess them, but declare the evils too

great and too deeply rooted to be cured. Again, when he proves the bright, beneficent possibilities sure to follow a restoration to social and political health, then the heedless will certainly call him "visionary" and a foolish "optimist." Yesterday, he was "tearful Tommy the pessimist." To-day he is "Happy Hobby the optimist," visionary and enthusiastic, who talks absurdly of overcoming eternal selfishness and of bringing about a millennium. By implication and often by utterance they declare it extreme folly to discuss a coming day, when all men can be strictly and exactly honest without certainly suffering or starving for so foolishly straining a moral point.

Reader, did you ever talk of doing "unto others as you would have others do unto you?" that Golden Rule, in the presence of business men? Did you ever refer to the subject of "brotherly love," in the presence of four or five men in a business office? and fail to see one of them smile pityingly on "your silly innocence," and another look with comical contempt at you, and another with patronizing tone and serio-comic face, as if he wanted to pitifully let you down easily into the valley of humiliation, say: "O, yes, yes, that millennium is not at hand yet, it will probably come through the evolutionary process of time, but of course we cannot expect to turn the world over in a minute. Things have to take their natural course."

Did you not know perfectly well that *he* was convinced that the world morally, ethically, would never turn over at all, and that he was, therefore, heedless of all facts and arguments to the contrary? But if you are an observer of facts, you noted that two or three of the "business men" present, *did* heed. And you

know that the number of heedful men is already very great, and is increasing with phenomenal rapidity ;—so fast, that the heedless man will soon be the rare man—the member of a harmless minority. And I believe you are glad that humanity is becoming heedful ; that the human family will therefore become merciful, just, and fraternal ; that to “love our neighbor” is not, after all, an utopian sentiment.

Let us turn back a few months,—to the time of the death of Father Hardhand. There is an object-lesson in the death of that good man, and in the circumstances connected with it, which we cannot afford to lose.

When Farmer Hardhand, father of our hero, sold two years ago, the sixty-eight acres of marshland to the mill-owners, it enabled him to stop some of the holes in the sinking ship, and to tide over the financial sand-bar ; the nearly inevitable climax of catastrophe that so regularly comes to the working New England farmer who is not a speculator in other men's opportunities, and who is dependent upon his productions for his prosperity ;—but that sale only helped to tide over the *first* sand-bar along a wreck-strewn coast ; only postponed the final catastrophe.

One day, Worthy Hardhand,—time-worn, work-worn, worry-worn Father Hardhand—came in from the post-office with a letter in his hand, post-marked “Scarborough.” That letter enclosed a notice of foreclosure of the mortgage which the Mill Company held on his farm. He sat down in his old familiar kitchen chair,—fumbled searchingly in his side pocket, and said somewhat nervously :—

“Mother,—where's my specs ? ”

She found them on the mantel-piece, handed them to him, and stood near, sadly watching his face as he sat reading the letter. Her poor old scrawny, big-knuckled hand rested on his shoulder; a look of hopeless, pitying sorrow came into her wrinkled face. With a woman's intuition she understood it all. She clumsily smoothed back his disordered soft gray hair. Then he reached back and caught her other hand in his own, and jerking it up to his mouth he kissed it, in a nervous, awkward, school-boy manner, and in a tone like the sob of despair, uttered the one word, "Mother." She sighed and took out her handkerchief. The tears that lay balancing on her lower lids fell over and crawled slowly down the wrinkles of her dear old face. He pulled her toward him, almost harshly. She stepped around before him and sitting down on his lap leaned her head over onto his, and quietly wept. Alone in the old kitchen, they sat there, still, for a full half hour; an occasional sniff by the old lady was the only animate sound; and the old clock in the corner tolled off the passing time with steady, unchanging, tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack. A pin fell out of her thin gray hair, that was once so thick and glossy and dark. Now, a poor little puny twist of silvery hair fell down onto his, and her tears also, fell onto his pitiful face. She lifted her handkerchief and wiped them away gently, while he sat dumb, like one paralyzed. Then he spoke.

"Mother; the end has come at last. I cannot save it now, the place has got to go. O, Marthy; I am so sorry for you, when I think how you have worked and worked, and it's only come to *this*. What a world of good things you have earned and deserved, and how

very little, Marthy, you've had. I'd be glad to die Marthy, this minute, if I could bring these arms full of golden treasures and lay them all down at your feet."

She hugged his head hard against her flat, bony bosom, and said as cheerfully as she could, while she kissed his forehead, "Never mind me, Pa, I'll git along somehow."

"Yes, Marthy," he said, "that's all,—that's all that remains for either on us to do now; now that we are old,—to 'git along,' as the law and the policeman says, just 'git along.'"

Then they were still again and the clock ticked louder than ever, tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack.

For nearly a year, Father Hardhand had been troubled somewhat, with "spells" as he called them, of weakness and short breath. Once, when after breakfast he had brought in a very big armful of wood he was so severely attacked that he was obliged to sit down and rest, and all thought he would faint away. He said, he "guessed it was only a bilious spell," and took some antibilious medicine. The same day Mrs. Hardhand anxiously remarked to Mrs. Vick that she felt "rill worried about Pa." He was "not at all hearty and well this year."

She wrote to John the night that the troublous letter came from Scarborough, explained the mortgage matter and added that "Pa" was "most used up." The next morning, Sunday, they remained abed later than usual and Proctor and Paul were home to breakfast. The boys said very little about the new trouble, and tried to keep cheerful. But with little that was cheerful to talk about, there was not much table chat. The boys

went out to "do up the chores for Pa" and had been "out to the barn" less than half an hour when Mother, in a frightening tone, called from the kitchen-door,

"Paul! Paul!" and they both ran to the house.

Father Hardhand sat in his chair by the stove with his hand pressed hard against his side, and a look of excruciating agony in his face; he could neither speak nor breathe. His hand dropped down, his head fell forward. They lifted him carefully onto the lounge, while Mother meanwhile frantically swung the fan before his face, held the camphor bottle to his nose, and rubbed camphor on his temples. Then there came a shiver and a faint weary gasp, and his chin dropped. In the stillness that followed, the clock ticked twice loudly, and then Proctor sobbed aloud, "O, Mother! he's dead!"

The doctors had an examination, an autopsy, as they termed it, and said it was heart disease; "Heart failure." Do you wonder he had heart failure? Do you wonder that "heart failure" is becoming the most common disease, the most fatal American disease? Doctors nearly all agree that it is brought on by anxiety and worry. They all prescribe for "heart failure," entire relief from anxiety, care, and worry, and advise perfect rest." That is it! The doctors are right! Worry is wearing us out.

Father Hardhand, the Sconset farmer, had worked and worried and gone to church; had prayed for strength to bear his burdens and trusted in Providence, through all the years of his struggle, without even getting to see that it was not by God's providence that his lot was so hard; without ever discovering how it was, that

some one systematically and permanently slipped in between himself and God's provident bounties. And so he died without even the Mosaic glimpse of the promised land. He had lived in the quaint old house, toiled on that Sconset farm, prayed in that little old church, for forty-three years ; trusted and struggled and hoped. Now in his sixty-seventh year his body was taken into the little church ; the trefoil window threw down its light in benediction on his coffin and on the altar. Shone down on the head of the good little-well-meaning minister of man-dwarfed and man-distorted Gospel. A clergyman who, with innocent guilelessness, spoke of "this dispensation" as "the Providence of God?" and called the attention of the brethren to "the beneficent provision of misery in this life as a way to joy." The choir sang, "Through tribulations deep, the way to glory lies," and the good old Connecticut farmers responded to that sentiment with an earnest, resigned, Amen! The church was crowded with people on that eventful day. Country wagons and buggies filled the church sheds. Teams were hitched to every tree and post up and down the road. The old dry cedar boughs on the church walls smelled more deathly than ever. Women sniffled and nervously used their handkerchiefs. Men sighed mournfully as they gazed down into the box, on the dead familiar face of their "neighbor" ; for they loved him. All passed in a wearying line that they might "view the remains." It was deathly still. Little children gazed furtively and moved along with wide, frightened, saddened eyes. Some whispered to others in the church entry as they were passing out, "And he was such a good man."

"What do you s'pose Mis' Hardhand will do now? I hearn he was dretfully embarrassed in debt."

"How terrible bad John does feel, seems 's if 'twould most kill 'im. It broke me all down to see 'im shake so, and hear 'im sob."

"Yes," old Mrs. Stern responded, "he don't seem to have the right Christian spirit. I stood right back of 'im, when he took leave of the corpse an' he groaned and said, 'It seems more like man's murder than God's providence,' and then he sobbed again, dretful."

"How Thetty Vick did take on," said another, "I don't b'lieve John Hardhand will ever marry her in this world; just think how long he has been a waitin' on her? She is gettin' 'long, too. John don't seem to get ahead much; he mus' be shif'less."

They carried Father Hardhand slowly into the "burying-ground" back of the church and laid him reverently down in some kindly dirt that his father had bought and that was *not* mortgaged.

His "will" gave all that might be left from his shipwrecked fortune, to his wife. They settled the estate promptly, and tried to save enough to "take care of her" for her few remaining years, but they could not. It was not sufficient, and the boys must help her.

A father, a mother, and three strong sons. Not a drunkard, an idler, or a shiftless, improvident one; five workers.

That dead farmer's hands alone, had wrought out wealth enough from that little tract of New England earth, to feed clothe and house ten people for seventy years? Yes, for a century.

He had left to his dear old companion in toil,—what? An old unpainted house out of repair, some common

furniture, four acres of earth, and dependence on others for a few years, until she would come to lie down beside him, where the thistle-blows are blown about in the summer air, and the grass-sparrow hides her nest.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MASTER AND MAN. THE PLACE WHERE A NUMBER WILL DO AS WELL AS A NAME.

THAT John Hardhand came at last to seek employment in the mills of Scarborough, that he did succeed in getting work in the particular factory of which Mr. Lord was a large stockholder and business head, is a fact so significant as to deserve more than passing consideration.

One afternoon, Milton Norris Opolee, alone in his private office at the Opolee mills, was sitting at his desk, busy with pen and paper, when the office-boy handed him a little slip on which was written in a rapid and not very painstaking hand, "J. Hardhand."

He glanced at the paper and said to the boy, "Tell Mr. Hartnett, I am engaged, and cannot be disturbed just at present; what is his business?"

The boy went back to John, and this is what he said to him, "De boss is busy, and say to tell Mr. Hartnett wat's his business."

"My name is not Hartnett, lad."

"Well, de boss read it Hartnett, anyhow, coz he says to me Hartnett, I know he did."

"Here," said John, "wait a moment and then take this to him." He carefully sharpened his pencil, picked up a writing-pad from a stand near by, and wrote in a neat, plain, business hand, "John Hardhand,

son of that Worthy Hardhand, late of Sconset, from whom you bought Sconset Marsh two years ago. My business with you, is to ask for work in the mills. If you cannot see me to-day, will you kindly advise me of a more convenient time for you to listen to my request?"

The president of the Opolee mills usually dismissed applications of this sort, with impatience when they were made directly to himself. Such imposition of small affairs, such freedom, was an unwarranted impertinence.

"No, I cannot be annoyed," was his usual answer. Or if the mill was short of hands, and he happened to be in particularly good humor, he would brusquely direct the applicant for work to the manager, who was the executive dispenser of "opportunities to work" in the mills. Mr. Opolee examined more carefully this second paper from John, and as he read the words, "son of that Worthy Hardhand," he permitted the hand that held the paper to fall slowly down onto the desk before him, and turning half round in his chair, said to the lad, "Tell the man to come in."

Mr. Opolee recognized his caller at once, and said to him, without rising from his chair, or changing his position, "Ah, Hardhand, how are you? Sit down. No, I don't know as I can do anything for you just now. I'll speak to my man, Tennant, about the matter, however; he attends to all that business, you know, the hiring and discharging of help, and so forth. Lewis (meaning Mr. Lewis Tennant, the manager) is a fine fellow for that sort of thing. You might see him about it; here, boy." The boy came promptly in and stood

near, waiting. Mr. Opolee's eyes chanced to fall on the bright little sparkling diamond that flashed in the sunlight like a flame, from the third finger of his own right hand. The hand still rested on the paper which John had written last, and now, again, Opolee saw the words "Worthy Hardhand" in a circle of sunlight that shone through a little hole in the window-shade opposite, and fell on the desk where his hand, still holding the paper, lay. It was the sunlight that made the diamond flash tongues of fire. It was that little spot of sunlight also that lighted up the name, which so held and commanded Norris Opolee's attention and thought. He hesitated a moment, then said to the boy, "Go out, Petie, I don't need you," and turning to John, remarked in calm, half-sympathizing tone, "Your father died quite suddenly, did he not? Some one, I think, said, of heart disease."

"Yes, sir," answered John.

"And he was financially embarrassed, I think Mr. Lord's wife told me?"

"Yes, sir," said John, "he was embarrassed."

Mr. Opolee was silent for a moment. "What can you do, Hardhand? Ever work in a factory, at all? What pay do you want? Could you learn to run a bobbin-winder?"

To all of which questions John answered in similar sequence, "I have never worked in a factory. I would expect the same pay as others get for similar work done as well. I could easily and quickly learn to run a bobbin-winding machine."

"Very well, you may come in the morning. I will tell Lew to put you to work for us. You will be here before I get down in the morning, so if Lew makes any ob-

jections, tell him to see me. O, don't have any words with him about it." Mr. Opolee wheeled around in his swinging chair, faced his desk, crushed the scrap of paper which John had written into a ball, threw it into the waste basket, and picked up his pen. John took the suggestion and left the office. They parted company without another word.

John walked down the street and on up Sconset road pondering over the peculiar status of Mr. Lewis Tenant; "our man who does all the hiring and discharging" of help; all the dealing out of opportunities to work—but who must fit his objections to the wish of Mr. M. N. Opolee. There was a little tinge of sarcasm mixed with John's smile of satisfaction over the successful result of his first effort in Scarborough. He met and passed many old friends. He overtook Jimmy McGurk and Terrance. They greeted him heartily, for neither of them had met him since the day of his father's funeral.

"Be the powers," said Jimmy, "I wouldn't have known ye, Meshter Hardhand, but fer yer likes to the fahther; ye got so changed like, an' sort o' sad lukin'. Ye aren't sick, are ye?"

"No," answered John, "no, I am perfectly well. I did not know I had changed much. I guess you had forgotten just how I did look." Yet John mentally wondered if he had changed, and remembered that he had quite neglected to consider the appearance of his own face for more than a year, he had been so earnestly studying other faces and so busy with other thoughts.

"How is Mrs. McGurk, Jimmy?"

"Quite well, thank ye, barrin' a palpytashin she's had off an' on ever sense she had de Grippe."

"Did you buy the Laidler farm yet, Jimmy?"

"No, John, I'm further from it now than iver."

"Surely, out of your hard work and your sharp economies you have saved up something?"

"Yis, John, a little, but not enough to buy the farrum. An' I am sceart of the margiges. I won't buy, less I buys free and clear; and besidst the interisht on the money an' the taxes together is more now than Missus Laidler gets from me fer the rint; 'tis a losin' houldin fer her, unless spikylashin' or somthin' sinds people up this way, wid their factory worruk or afther homes for the factory min, which they won't, wid plenty of land, an' good buildin' land too, down close to the Burrough."

"No, Jimmy, neither you nor I will live to see Scarborough spread out so far as to need our Sconset land for building-lots on which to erect homes for the poor nor mills for the rich. And when they want it to back-water their *ponds* over, they know how to make their own price for it and take it."

Then the three were silent for a time, for Jimmy understood what a damning curse to John's life the back-water from Scarborough Mills had been.

Terrance made the inquiry, "Mishter Hardhand, did ye know, me mother's cousin is jusht now come over from Ireland an is shtoppin' wid us? Ye'd ought to see the greenhorn. He'd chirk ye up wid his funny shtories. He kept us all laughin' to die wid de shtyle of 'im, an' de far down brogue he have."

"Whisht, Terrance," said Jimmy reprovingly, "have ye no betther manners than be funnin' about yer kin-folks? Sure I had a brogue meself whin I kem over, uvery bit as bad as him." And addressing John, he

said, "Don't mind him, Meshter Hardhand. Roger, Roger Ryan—that's me cousin's name—is a fine intilligent mon, an' a idycaated mon as well."

They were nearing the Hardhand homestead.

"Come over and see uz of an evenin', wanst in a while," said Jimmy, "we'll be honored to have ye."

"I will, Jimmy. I certainly will. Good-day," and John turned in at the gate.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT WORK IN THE MILLS. PERMISSION TO READ. EYES FOR
THE BLIND.

"HEIGHO, mother!" For she came to the door, having heard the voices of Jimmy and Terrance as they bade John good-bye outside, "how are you feeling?" inquired John.

"Pretty well, son, but for the pain in my side. I guess I have taken cold again. My cough is a little bad, and if you aren't too tired I wish you would go down to the station after supper, and get me some of that cough syrup." She took out a little flattened portmonnaie, counted out cautiously twenty-five cents in change—a dime, two nickels, a two-cent piece and three pennies—with trembling hands and gave the money to John. A few pennies only remained in the pocket-book. He looked with startled scrutiny into her face, and hurried off at once toward the station. She called after him, "You needn't go 'till after supper, son."

"I can go as well now, mother, and I want to stop at the Post Office."

On returning, he brought with him a letter from the lawyer who had managed his case in the court of special sessions at New York. The lawyer had acquired a real interest in this client, and as John sat down to supper, he remarked, "Mother, a clew has been discov-

ered, which may possibly lead to the detection of the person who stole that piece of calico. I begin to feel that at last my name will be cleared of that scandal."

"Bless you, my boy." And the tears came into her eyes. "Bless you. I knew it would come out at last. I *knew* it."

"Mother, have you never,—when you considered my poverty and the temptations—have you never wondered if it might not be, that I fell?"

"Never for an instant, John! You steal? No one who knows you as I do would ever believe such an absurd accusation."

"Mother!" John exclaimed, and rising from his seat he bent over her and kissed her. "*Mother!*"—It sounded so like that same expression made only a few months before in this same room, by the now dead husband and father. "Thank you, my best friend," said John, and then they were silent. The face of the clock was toward them, its hands pointed to the fast-fleeing hours of time and its monotonous tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack, mindful of the past, relentlessly hewed into the future time. She crowded back the tears, wiped her eyes, and poured his tea.

John had brought with him from New York a book on political economy, a gift from one of his Cooper Union friends. It dealt thoroughly with the laws of trade, with the effect of trade as a means of production, with the natural course of trade, and with the question of legislative control and direction of the business of exchanging products of labor. Feeling a little relieved now from the strain of anxiety, he was inclined to believe that he could now keep his mind to the subject-matter, and read more understandingly than when he

had attempted to read the book in New York. He took it from the closet shelf, sat down by the lamp-stand, quietly read for an hour, chatted awhile pleasantly with his mother, who brightened, smiled, and was very happy in his companionship, and finally retired to bed. His mother coughed severely and frequently during the night, and this many times awakened him. He heard Fido barking at neighbor Vick's. Into his mind came thoughts of Thetty, and of all that might have been. It was only in times of the greatest mental anxiety and struggle that there was not in his mind thoughts of her. They resumed their old place now. In a mental soliloquy, he wondered if she still, sometimes, thought of him. If she at last had learned to love Captain Vance.

His mother avoided any mention of Thetty's name in his presence, yet John knew she frequently called there during his absence, and that she did little acts of kindness for his mother. On one occasion he had met her there ; she sat with an empty plate and folded napkin in her lap, and arose to go as John came in. She had shaken hands with him in a neighborly, passing way, spoken of the new shoe factory being built on Sconset road, toward Scarborough, kissed Mrs. Hardhand with reverent affection, bade John carelessly good-bye, and then was gone. As John recalled it now, he certainly felt sad, but thought he was only better satisfied with the belief, even the assurance, that she had been able to master her difficulties and rise above them. He was not sorry that she could be content. He wished he, too, might be so. He felt that he ought to be. Then, with compassionate thought of pity for himself, he sought atonement for his own discontent in the fact

that he was more nearly alone than Thetty. Thetty had at her command the love and fortune of a successful and honorable man. He turned that sore thought over and over in his mind, and lacerated his soul, in efforts to chastise it into submission ; but with only partial success. He was unable to fall into the oblivion of sleep again. Dawn was breaking. He arose and built the fire. The Bible lay open upon the table. He lifted it up. His mother had left it there ; arising from its perusal when before going to bed she went to wind the clock, forgetting to close the Book and put it on the shelf. John read these lines, “The earth have I given unto the children of men, for a possession.” It seemed bitter irony, almost a sarcasm to him. He would not disturb his mother’s faith with his doubts, but he wondered if she had pondered the words as she read them ; had considered her own position, and yet held her faith. He went to the door of her room, which was part way open, and called softly, “Mother, mother.” She answered him, arose and soon joined him at the breakfast table.

At seven o’clock that morning, John Hardhand had made his status clear to the foreman of the Opolee Mills, Mr. Lewis Tennant, and was at his work in the bobbin-room. John took readily to the employment, and the little to be learned was so soon acquired and so soon followed by the monotony of mechanical repetitions, that it became tediously irksome to him ; and he found himself suffering by mental introspection. He was really alarmed with the fear of consequent insanity. He discovered that he could, to the very second, mentally measure the time it took to fill a frame of bobbins, without giving it the least direct

attention. The hands in the Opolee Mill were, he knew, forbidden to bring newspapers into the loom-rooms or bobbin-room. Yet he saw that a very few books were brought. He asked the foreman, Lew Tennant, if reading books while attending the machines was forbidden.

"What d'ye say?" responded Tennant.

"Is book reading forbidden here?" asked John.

"Well, that *depends*," he replied. "It is generally understood, the hand that gives all his attention to the machine gives best satisfaction to me, and to the boss, and is less likely to lose his job; but there is no particular rule forbidding reading, and I generally let it pass, if the hand does his full quota of work with the machine and makes no mistakes."

"I thought I should like to read," remarked Farmer John, "and am certain I can do better work by such healthful occupation of my mind. I now find myself in such mental confusion at the end of each idle wait, that in more than one instance I have permitted the machine to run past the point to "throw off," and have broken all the threads. Once I became so mentally chaotic, that I had an almost uncontrollably crazy desire to kick the frame off those little insignificant hooks that hold it, and see it sail out of the window into the free air. I thought it acted as if it wanted to *get away and fly off.*" And John laughed nervously.

The manager looked curiously at him, and answered, "I don't care how much you read, if the boss don't; but those hands that are forever reading and *thinking* are also forever kicking up a mess and breeding discontent with the relation of the *hands* to the *heads* of business. Better speak to Mr. Opolee. He appears to choose to

be your manager (this he spoke in a tone of cautious sarcasm). I presume he will let you smoke at your work if you want to, or organize an anarchist conclave, experiment with dynamite, preach natural religion, promiscuous marriage, and death to all who disagree, if you want to. He is absurdly obliging, when he takes a fancy, and equally exacting when he don't. *I don't care; ask him.*"

John, in quest of permission to read, did call on Mr. Opolee, that very night. And by the way, though he had now been at his work two weeks, he had not seen the face of his employer since the afternoon of his engagement. This time, John entered the office unannounced, for he was a *hand*, and could be trusted to stand quiet and wait if the president was busy, or to go out again if the head of the business did not look up. John removed his hat, held it in his hand and stood waiting. Opolee turned, merely glanced at him, when he heard the noise of his entering footsteps, gave no nod nor look, even of recognition, but continued his writing. At last he stopped, whirled around in his swivel chair, and without any preliminary salute, said,

"Well, Hardhand, what do you want?"

"I desire your permission to read, in the unoccupied moments at my machine."

"To read?"

"Yes, sir."

"Read what?"

"Why? Anything my choice dictates, and which will not interfere at all with the success of my work of getting all that is possible out of the machine."

"Not newspapers, Hardhand? They get kicked about the floor, are unsightly and are regular fire-bait."

"No, Mr. Opolee, books."

"What kind of books is it you want to read? Have you got any books? I have a big library, I suppose three or four thousand books; I find very little time to read; it is doubtful if I have read the title-page of one out of ten of them. Wilkins and Mrs. Opolee made out the order list for the library ten years or more ago, and she and myself have added a few books to it since. If you wish to do so, you can get books from my library; but be sure you return them. What do you fancy? Novels, I suppose, and pioneer history?"

"Yes," answered John, "I enjoy some novels. I am fond of Victor Hugo, some of Dickens', some of William Dean Howell's, and of Garland's stories, and in the light of my later experiences I should like to read again the history of the fall of the Roman Empire, and there are many profound books that interest me: books on sociology, governments, ethics and law.

"Don't, for Heaven's sake, Hardhand, get to reading those loose socialistic absurdities, that I hear so much about, and which have created so much discontent and unhappiness among workingmen. I don't see why they want to make themselves miserable over what they can't help. Why, they are frequently most outrageously ungrateful toward those who give them work, and upon whom they must depend for a living. Why they choose to spurn the very hand that feeds them, I cannot see."

"There are, Mr. Opolee,"—John cautiously replied—"a great many things to be seen in this world, that the most of us *never* see. Things that some are shut out from, and that some trample over without seeing. Having eyes, it is our duty to see. There is no thing good

nor bad, that has not in it a message and a lesson. In blindness lies the only danger to progress. In seeing the only safety. The knowledge of the truth of things which are in themselves evil, is profitable, and directs the wise to step aside and not fall into evil, or, having fallen in, to clamber out again as best and quickly as we can."

"Quite a sensible philosophy, Hardhand. Pretty good; better write a book; ha, ha, ha! 'Hardhand's Philosophy of Progress,' 'Open Your Eyes,' or 'Eyes for the Blind.' There's *money* in it, ha, ha! That's what they write for, every time—make no mistake—and what they preach for; I was a-going to say what they pray for, for that matter. But my mother never prayed that I might become rich, though I remember she prayed that I 'might be permitted the prosperity that enricheth the soul.' *She* had a rich soul—if there is a soul,—bless her. She's gone to Heaven—if there is a heaven. I'd like, for her sake, to believe in God—if there is a God."

"I," replied John, startled by the half-admitted blasphemy, "would not like to believe in God to *oblige* any one, not even a sainted mother; but I do believe in God, because I cannot violate my reason, my common-sense, by denying the existence of an intelligent, creative will. That is God. I am not afraid or ashamed of the good old name. Nor am I obliged in using the name to accept all or any of the terrible or unreasonable attributes assigned to Him by the distorted fears or fancies of mortal men."

"Hold on a little, Hardhand, and walk up to the house with me, on your way home. It's only a block out of your way, and I will show you my library. Yes,

you can read a little, if it don't interfere with your work. But don't neglect your work."

"I can hardly spare time to go that way to-night, thank you," said John, "I am a little anxious about mother, and I am so untidy with the shop dirt and working-clothes. Some other time I would be glad to do so."

"Very well. I will tell Mrs. Opolee to open the library for you whenever you come. You can drop in coming or going, or evenings, whenever you like. Leave Mrs. Opolee a memorandum of the books you take, and she will return it to you when you bring them back, see?"

"Thank you! Good-night, Mr. Opolee," and John went homeward.

John did not go directly home from Mr. Opolee's, but stopped by the way at the office of Lawyer Fixem, to get needed advice and to discuss some matters of importance. Proctor—with a family of his own and the responsibilities of a home to be provided for—could do very little in aid of his poor old mother, without intensifying the miseries of his own poverty; and Paul was in position to do but little better than Proctor. John—having deliberately planned his future for the life of a bachelor—could live very properly at the old home. The two brothers made this proposition to him: "Stay with and care for mother as long as she lives; we will assign to you our interest in the four acres, and all that is left of the homestead; we know it is a small reward to offer you for the responsibility, but it is all we have to give you for performing the duty that we each owe to her. God bless her." John accepted the charge, and re-

ceived their quit-claim as heirs to the homestead. Soon after this event, there came a period of what is called "hard times." Credits were bad. Financial confidence was disturbed. Savings banks were frightened; for "runs" were being made on them by needy or frightened poor depositors. Several banks had failed or "stopped payment."

John Hardhand drew that chance-found \$330.00 from the bank and bought back from the "Neawinska Mills" corporation, eight acres of the old farm which immediately joined the four-acre remnant left from the mortgage wreckage in which his father went down. The Mill Co. gave him a quit-claim deed. Now, he could keep a cow.

If the owner of that lost money could be found, John would immediately transfer the deed to him. It was reasonably certain that its owner would never try to find either the money nor its worthy finder. All reasons forbade that event. The loser would not wish any publicity made of his relations to the two "strange women," nor of his unmanly,—even disgusting, debauchery. More—he was rich and could better afford to lose the money and spare his reputation than reclaim the one and lose the other. Men have been known to pay for "a good reputation." By the willing performance of his duty to his parent, and by this peculiar incident—or accident—of the lost money which John had found, money which was very wisely disowned by its mysterious loser, John became possessed of some "vested rights,"—some "legal rights," in the Earth.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHADOWED. "SHE." THE GIRLS IN SCARBOROUGH "BUS."

THE two sisters, Maggie and Thetty Vick, sat at their work in the second floor office of the "Scarborough Municipal Railway Company." Maggie, at the typewriter stand, pad in her hand, was taking down dictation of a letter by the secretary. The dictating finished, he walked away, and Maggie hurriedly rattled the keys of the typewriter, preparing the letter for the mail; for it must go out to-night, and it was already past quitting time—six o'clock.

Thetty sat on a high stool before a desk where she had before her an unobstructed view of the street. She completed the last entry, put the book into the rack on the wall beside her, and waiting for Maggie to finish her work, sat looking out of the window at the passers-by in the street below. She saw a figure, a familiar figure, across the street, striding along rapidly toward Sconset road. Her heart gave a half-dozen quick rap-a-taps, a little color came into her face, and then the rap-a-taps took up their steadier regular rhythm again—*John!*

Thetty gazed calmly at his retreating figure and noted the manly step as it grew less and less in the distance. She was about to step from her stool to get her wrap, when the sight of another figure startled her. The color flew into her face and as quickly subsided, leaving it

pale; even her lips for a moment lost their bright red coloring—*She!*

This last figure was walking rapidly after the first one, apparently as a spy, for the woman moved right and left to avoid obstacles to her view, and made all possible effort to keep John in sight. Thetty sprang to the wardrobe, hastily threw on her wrap, and said to Maggie, “I guess I will walk along; you will not be through for half an hour yet.” She hurried down, looked up the street and started to walk in that direction. The woman was gone from sight, and Thetty sauntered along leisurely. Ah! again she had a glimpse of her. She was at the door and just entering the office of a real estate lawyer, and Thetty stopped at the millinery store a little way from it; she hardly knew why. She entered, looked at some hat frames, then came out and stood for a time gazing into the show window at the display of trimmed hats. This window had a mirror in the back which reflected the display in duplicate. It reflected the shadow of Thetty also. Ah, “She,” “the woman” was coming out again from the lawyer’s office, and back, directly back toward the spot where Thetty stood. Would she pass? Thetty *felt* the woman looking at her as she passed. Thetty saw her reflected in the show window; saw her look, with a gaze bold, heart-hungering, pitiful; a look of mixed admiration, shame, contempt, and despair. “She,” the stranger, even hesitated. Thetty’s heart stopped. The “woman” walked on. Thetty lived again, and drew a deep breath. Just once “She” turned and looked back, then turned the corner towards the station and was gone.

“Heigho, sister,” said Thetty, for at that moment Mag-

gie joined her in front of the milliner's store. "You are acquainted with Will Belden, in Fixem's office? A magnificently dressed woman just came out of there, and she dropped the handkerchief you see lying there by their steps. Take it in to Will, for the woman will doubtless be back for it soon."

Maggie picked it up and went with it to young Belden, saying, "How d'ye do, Will? Here is a handkerchief the lady dropped who just went out of the door. She will come back for it no doubt." Maggie looked at the handkerchief. It was of white Japanese silk, embroidered in white, and bore the initials "M.V." in the corner.

Will took it, and seeing the initials, said: "I guess you have handed me the wrong one; this is your own handkerchief, Maggie."

"No, it isn't," replied Maggie. "Isn't it funny? Same initials, as I live. Who was she?"

"I don't know her," the young man answered. "She was from New York, so she said, and called to make inquiry about some property next adjoining your father's. I think Mr. Fixem knows her. She inquired for him; he is out of town. She looked quite a little like you, too, Maggie. Some rich relative come out from the Indies, perhaps, to surprise you with a fortune."

"Oh, nonsense," replied Maggie. Then the truth flashed into her mind, and she hurried out, overwhelmed with regrets that she had entered the office, and fearful that the woman might return for the handkerchief. To Thetty, whom she immediately joined in the street again, Maggie exclaimed, "'*She!* Why didn't you tell me?'"

"I supposed," replied Thetty, somewhat tartly, "that you could go in and leave a lost handkerchief without stopping to gossip and ask questions, yet I am anxious to know what brought *her* up here."

"Just to spy on us, Thetty, I think."

"Just to spy on John Hardhand, that I saw, and know," replied Thetty.

"Isn't it terrible, Thetty?"

"No, Maggie; I don't think she has any desire to harm us, nor to revenge herself. She has a wonderfully expressive face, and as I saw it reflected in the show window, in its conflicting emotions, it was like the face of a martyr in torment, gazing into the door of Heaven and impetuously doing self-inflicted penance with the hope of being purged of shame."

"I don't care, Thet, she frightens me, and I believe something terrible will come of it yet. She looks so exactly like you, too."

"That is the chief cause of my alarm, Madge; and it is perhaps, also, the chief reason for my pity for her. If she had wished to harm us, she would have confronted me in the street, for she saw me, and knew me and hesitated, but in pity spared me, though she looked as though she wanted to just touch the hem of my garment, poor thing. The creature has got a heart, that's certain."

"Well, let us hope she has learned all she cared to know, and won't come up to Scarborough again. I hope so, any way."

"So do I, sister," said Thetty, "and yet I wish I could know more of the poor creature's history. Her face haunts me. What a terrible and blasting double she would make, if she chose to take that rôle and

characterize me. Yes, Maggie, you are right ; it is a terrible thing. I, at least, am almost at her mercy, if she chose to turn tormentor. How I wish I could know her purpose in coming here, since I must rely upon her respect for us and her pity for us, when she considers the evil consequences she could visit upon us. How can we reach her, and know her feeling toward us ? She is perhaps beyond our power to help. We may not respect her, we may not love her, we cannot associate with her, but, O sister, we can pity her. How is it *possible* for us to help her ? She must not know that we really have any knowledge of her existence ; for if she should learn that, and become angered at our neglect of her, she would revenge herself on us, effecting our swift and terrible humiliation."

As the Sconset express wagon came along, the girls hailed the driver and stepped in. This wagon commonly went from Scarborough to Sconset about a half-hour after the stage, carrying trunks, parcels, and tardy passengers. They overtook Paul as he was walking home. He jumped in behind, rode as far as the old homestead, and stopped a moment there to see his mother. Paul still boarded with the Vicks, and helped Mr. Vick at odd times, whenever his piece-work at the shop in Scarborough failed and did not require his presence there. Railroad trains did not pass Sconset at hours such as to accommodate the employees of the Scarborough factories ; and a stage line, a "bus," as it was called, drove up from the Borough in the evening and down from Sconset in the morning, carrying factory-hands, at a small weekly fare. It came and went with a load of human freight.

Neither Maggie nor Thetty needlessly disturbed their

parents with a report of the visit of "She" to Scarborough that night. Nor had they ever mentioned their discovery of her identity in New York. They had wisely kept that secret, and now kept this.

As usual, they rode down in the 'bus next morning. For the most part, the Sconset men and boys walked to their work in Scarborough. The stage was filled with women and young girls. Their conversation was cheerful and jolly. Indeed the ride in the 'bus was the social ebullition of the day; the remainder of which was hum-drum and speechless, always. Now they laughed easily, and joked. Criticised one another in mock seriousness, until the victim began to look doubtful of their intentions, or to accept their chaffing in earnest, and look soberly sad. Then all would burst into laughter and continue it until the culprit who had dared to suppose they were in earnest had joined in the laugh with them, and paid such pleasant penalty for her lost faith in their good-nature. Some of the older ones talked seriously.

"Maggie," remarked Kitty Wells to Miss Vick, "did you know that a great New York corporation is going to build a shoe factory down here on Sconset road, nearly a mile this side of Scarborough dam?"

"Only the fact, but no particulars of it, Kitty."

"Yes, well, Mr. Marlowe was telling us all about it yesterday. They expect to employ over twelve hundred hands. And he told me also that the 'Swing-shuttle' Sewing Machine Company, whose new building is less than a mile from Sconset, have got their machinery all in, and expect to commence operations the first of next month. Ed told me they were going to start up with about three hundred hands, nearly all of whom,—

about two hundred and fifty,—are old hands that came with them from their Williamsburgh factory in York State. Some of them are here now, and others coming on daily. It is going to create quite a boom for the boarding-house keepers. Let us start a boarding-house, Madge, down at Scarborough."

"Better hire a house first, and then see if you have anything left after you have paid the first quarter's rent, to buy dishes and furniture with," said Susie Baudoin.

"Yes," retorted Ada Hayes, "Mrs. Darby, where brother Tom boards, and where I get my lunch at Scarborough, told me yesterday, that the demand for board and rooms was increasing wonderfully, and that she had hoped she was going to be able to get a better price, and make a little profit out of the hard and disagreeable work now, but that Mr. Lord (he owns the row she lives in) had already advanced her rent, and told her it would be a third more next month, and that in the spring he would either tear down the buildings, put a fence round the lot, and put it into the market for a business or factory site, or else he would 'have to' advance the rent of the property to more than double present prices. He said to her that the present rent was not equal to the insurance on the buildings and simple interest on the 'value of the empty lots.' And that the lots alone would be worth three times their present value in less than two years. Mrs. Darby is about crazed with anxiety. She says the poor girls pay her at present for board nearly all the wages they get, and that they cannot pay her much more, for they cannot get the money. And she says it will take every dollar of profit she can make to pay the rent; and leave nothing for herself, with all

her hard work. She might as well be a *slave* to her landlord and done with it ; for then she would be fed ; and now she is uncertain of even that."

"That's so," chimed in Mamie Savage, "every bit as well a slave, and we girls that have homes, and are not obliged to board out, we that get our board for nothing or for mere cost of the materials, have an advantage over the homeless ones."

"Yes, and it's a shame," retorted Thetty Vick, "an advantage which makes it possible for us to work on smaller salaries, which forces the homeless ones to the same rate of pay, and which is practically giving to our employers and the landlords the labor of our parents in providing for us."

"The new shoe factory will employ mostly girls," added Maggie Vick, "and I hear that at piece-work they can make great wages."

"That's possible to only a very few, mark my words," Thetty put in ; "if all, if any considerable or competitive number of them make great wages, the great wages will be very promptly cut down, never fear."

Kitty Wells added, "The Fielding girls are going to work in the shoe factory, and Betty Wheat, William Hayes' two daughters, Mamie Cornhill, Hattie Ryland and every member of Henry Meadow's family, for he has let out his farm on shares to a hay-baling company. Nearly all the young men and boys of Sconset have gone or are going into the factories. The farms will be deserted pretty soon ; and for that matter, Pa says farming don't pay nowadays, expenses are so high, and prices of farm produce so low, nothing pays much, but tobacco ; he hasn't any tobacco land, and only an occasional one has."

The stage stopped before a factory entrance. With much giggling, chattering and many girlish ejaculations, several got up from the crowded seats and hurried out of the 'bus.

"O, Maggie Vick," screamed one, "you have been sitting on my lunch-bag all the way down, do look! She has made Washington pie of the whole thing." They screamed with laughter, and fully half the load went scrambling out. The 'bus drove on to another factory, where the remaining few alighted. The Vick girls walked a block to the railroad office, and the work of another day began. So one day after another repeated the same routine as the days, the weeks, the years rolled on.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SHORTY'S ARREST. POVERTY, CRIME, AND CHARITY. THE
“NAME” RESTORED TOO LATE.

DETECTIVE KARL confidentially communicated the facts of his latest discovery to John Hardhand's attorney, and asked him to inform his client of it. The discovery was that of which John's lawyer had written to him, and which John mentioned to his mother as “a clew,” when he came in with the letter and the cough syrup from the Sconset store. Three months after that discovery, North & Co. lost a piece of real silk velvet; traced it to chief shipping clerk Shorty's department, and after a month of fruitless effort failed to get any least clew of it beyond that department.

Then the detective, under the advice of the lawyer, determined to submit the evidence of the shipping tag and the scrap of paper to Shorty, and hazard the result.

He first went to him in a kindly and confidential manner, and said, “Shorty, that missing velvet has been traced to the department in your charge, and no farther clew to it has been found. The grounds for reasonable suspicion of you must be apparent to yourself. Unless you can assist us to trace it farther, or to find it and detect the thief, it is probable you will be discharged. Indeed it is already determined that you will be. You have been with the house a long time, and if you are innocent I don't want to see you turned out, nor do you want to lose your position.”

Shorty was alarmed, and he showed it plainly. The detective was already convinced. Yet it was possible that fear of losing his position was the only cause of Shorty's agitation. The latter suggested all sorts of theories for the loss of the velvet, but failed to support them with any evidence ; and he was too fearful of being watched and caught if he should attempt the manufacture of evidence now.

When the worried man came into the store next morning, he was met at the door by the watchman, and told to go up for a moment to Mr. North's private office. He hesitated ; but the eyes of the watchman were on him. Mr. North was already there ; an unusual thing at so early an hour. A policeman came up, immediately behind Shorty also, and took a seat outside the office door. Then followed twenty minutes of agonizing suspense. Mr. North was busied with papers and writing at the desk. The officer at the door yawned. The florid color of Shorty's face gradually left it. Even his lips turned bluish white, and his hands restlessly moved about and trembled perceptibly. The detective entered, with that fateful wrapping-paper in his hands, and Shorty's heart thumped so loudly that he feared it would be heard, as Karl silently proceeded to unfold the paper and hold it up to view before the terrified man. Mr. North turned around in his chair and faced Shorty also.

"There ! Mr. Short," calmly began the detective, "I bring first before you these evidences of your guilt, before proceeding to others, in order to show you in all fairness and in regular order, how we know you to be guilty. In order that yourself can see that it is the unpleasant duty of this firm to punish you, and to take

measures to prevent any repetition of such crimes by you or any other employee."

Shorty attempted to speak.

"Be silent. Don't utter a word before I have finished. The conclusion which the evidence we have at our command establishes, is just and unquestionable. Here, look ; some of the proofs ! " He hesitated, rang the bell, whispered to the boy that answered his summons ; and the little fellow soon returned with Shorty's nail-box. "Shorty," continued the detective, "a hand-saw in its paper box was expressed to you by friends in Stamford, out of the hardware store of Goldie & Lewis. Here is the shipping tag, see ? And here is the address, to you. You stole that piece of calico and put it in your wardrobe closet. Lest a glimpse should be caught of it when you had occasion to open the door, and to facilitate your getting it out of the store, you wrapped it about with this paper, and tied it with this string. You had brought this paper to the store wrapped around your nail-box, which you had taken home by permission, to do some repairs in your house. When you tied this string around the calico, lest the shipping card on the string should betray you, you tore it off, and shoved it down between the floor and the wall. I walked through your department one day, and as I chanced to look toward you, I noticed that simply a glance from me alarmed you. You followed me to the door, watching to discover if I was suspicious of you. I turned quickly and saw your face directed toward me. You convicted yourself, by the look of anxious terror in your face. After that unfortunate act, you went to your closet and moved the calico about, several times, to more completely hide it. In moving

it about, you tore off this fragment of the paper, see? (holding up the bit). It dropped down into a corner of the closet and awaited its time to condemn you. You grew doubtful of the safety of trying to get the calico out of the building, and by some means you gained access to the closet used by John Hardhand. You transferred the bolt of cloth to *his* closet and carefully hid it there, from his eyes and other eyes, hid it in a corner behind an old unused coat, until all should be forgotten, or an opportunity occurred to sly it out, or if otherwise it were found, the safety of yourself should be assured by punishment visited on himself, and that you might escape amid the crushing havoc of his ruin. Here, see this." He fitted the torn tag to the fragment of it still remaining on the string. "And see here." He fitted the fragment of paper to the missing corner of the wrapping paper. "And here." He set the nail-box down on the wrapper and fitted it exactly to the right angle torn hole and the soiled and worn corners where it had once folded around the corners of the nail-box.

"My God!" interrupted Shorty, "what else *could* I do? I had a great family, half starving. What would become of me if I lost my job? I had made a mistake that I could not correct; I had deceived, to cover it up. I didn't mean to steal the calico." And then he clumsily detailed the whole affair, as it has been more carefully detailed in a previous chapter of this history. "I was a-scaret I would lose my job."

"Ah, ha," said detective Karl, "that is all very well for the calico theft, but does not excuse the theft of the velvet; and after having, as you believed, succeeded in evading the penalty for the first crime, this second one

is unpardonable. The velvet is very valuable, and you fully appreciated it when you took it."

"O, Mr. Karl, I can get it back again; I know I can. I am dretful sorry that I took it. Won't you have mercy on me if I will get it back again, and not send me to prison? O, just for the sake of my poor Mary and our children? Say, Mr. North," and he turned in appeal to his employer, "won't you forgive me if I will get the velvet back again?"

Mr. North sat dumb. The other partner, who had entered and was listening, started to speak. Mr. North motioned him to be silent. The officer at the door smiled in pitiless contempt as the poor fellow frantically appealed, first to one, then to another, for mercy, and hurried on into helpless surrender of full confession. Even to the statement of all possible convicting evidences of his guilt; in the poor fellow's reckless scramble for mercy, mercy! Forgetting, madman as he was, that the establishment of *justice* is the purpose of law, not the gift of mercy.

"Where is the velvet?" asked Mr. North.

"Jean Gautier, the old-clothes man in Hester Street, has got it."

"You had better tell the exact truth of this matter,—or it will go hard with you."

"I will, Mr. North; do forgive me. Before God, I will tell you the truth; and I will go right straight to Gautier's with the officer any minute you say so, and get it if he hasn't sold it; for he said he knew I had stolen it, and it was dangerous business to receive it at all. If some one will just pay him back the five dollars he advanced to me, I will pay them back Saturday night out of my wages; I haven't got a dollar now;

—won't you, Mr. Karl?" (turning to the detective). And then looking from one to another about the room, he continued: "If you only knew how poor we are, and how sick my Mary was, and how the medicine I got with that five dollars just brought her back from death's door, you would pity me, I know you would; I know you would."

Intellectually not strong, with but little moral sensibility and less manly courage, his agony was pitiful.

They did arrest Gautier; did indict Shorty, and bring him to trial. A public appeal was made for charitable aid to keep his family from starving while he was in prison. Their miserable condition and the great temptation that had environed him, brought about a popular reaction of public sentiment, which, voicing itself through the public newspapers, went to the other extreme—demanded his pardon. Subscription papers were circulated. A sum in charity was raised, amounting to over five hundred dollars, which was turned over to this family, only to do them as much harm as good, through the absurd and hurtful use they made of it. It had an even worse result—that of convincing them that they had only to whine in effortless idleness, and plead their poverty, in order to expect and have right to boldly demand—*charity*. Alas, what trouble we are making for ourselves by trying to substitute charity for justice!

Now that Shorty is punished, now that Shorty's family has been fed and spoiled, we may well go back to the date of his first crime, and consider the circumstances at that time, and the relation of the several parties affected by it.

This particular Short, ambitious assistant to John

Hardhand in the service of North & Co., was receiving nine dollars a week—a somewhat modest salary on which he must feed and clothe and house himself, a good wife and three hearty children. The income was certainly not munificent. The exchequer was not quite equal to the demands made upon it, and the demands were imperative ; for life or death depended upon their being met. His family always used the poorest and the cheapest food ; they were obliged to do so, and accustomed themselves to poor food—very often had not enough even of that. They habitually made use of that excellent prescription of the “doctors” for dyspeptics—“leave the table feeling that you *could* eat a little more ;” that is, leave the table a little hungry. This man’s family had marvelously good appetites ; no one of them had a trace or symptom of dyspepsia ; and yet, the parents frequently, and the children always, went away from the table hungry. Mr. Short did not talk about this unpleasant fact among *his* friends ; nor yet have such persons among *yours*. He had too much pride, then, to confess his inability to provide for his family. They did not whiningly come then and tell *you*, my well-intentioned reader, my quite comfortable friend, and so *you* “don’t believe any intelligent man in America, *willing to work*, need go hungry.” But let me assure you, “neighbor,” there are other people than yourself who, from common observation, from a touch of personal experience, and from well-authenticated information, have been convinced that there are at least five million working people in America who do work hard, are willing to work hard, who nevertheless go hungry every day, and have less and poorer food than they need. In this estimate is not included

that other million *idle* men, who are willing and anxious to be workingmen, but have no place to work, no material to work with—are shut out from both by the *owners* of the earth.

This family of five persons—father, mother and three children—to be fed and cared for with nine dollars a week! It filled the man's mind with continual anxiety, a frenzied and constant alarm. It developed from his half-famishing need an all-controlling, irresistible greed, that became almost animal and ravenous. A greed like that of a starved dog, likely to, in his hungry haste, craunch the very fingers that handed him food. John Hardhand seemed to be in his way. Whatever stood between this workingman, Short, and more, *more* pay was something to be rushed upon, gnashed, torn, flung aside regardlessly. It is thus *conditions* tempt us, or drive us away from our better selves to villainy.

But now, at last, farmer John Hardhand's innocence was established. He had outlived the harm to his reputation which the unjust accusation had once wrought. He had also, before this disproval came, become a factory workman and adopted a vocation and sphere of life in which the calumny was practically harmless. But the full force of its power in shaping and directing his life had wrought immortal results—results not to be altered by any legal or popular acquittal from all charge or suspicion of crime.

From John's New York attorney Mr. North learned of his whereabouts, and wrote him a long and congratulatory letter, expressing his great satisfaction in being relieved from every excuse for suspicion of his guilt. He was still more gratified with these pleasing results, because they reassured his confidence in his own especial

little conceit—that he was very expert at reading character in the human face. He believed John to be an honest man from the moment he first saw his face, and had at all times doubted his guilt, even when he was under arrest. For this reason he had not pushed the case, in spite of circumstances so suspiciously convincing of guilt. Mr. North was so delighted with his successful reading of John Hardhand's face that he (quite like many another specialist) seemed to forget the rebutting fact that Shorty's face had also been before him through all these years that had been required to prove his correct reading of the face of John Hardhand.

Mrs. Hardhand had lived to see John's honor vindicated and his honesty proved. Thetty could have hugged him in her delight, but instead she simply congratulated him, shook his hand and repeated what his mother had said three months before, when he mentioned the discovery of a clew: "No one who really knows you, John, ever for a moment believed you guilty of the crime." John himself took the acquittal very indifferently. It came too late. The charge had exhausted its evil service, and the disproval now had little interest for him. And yet, John's innocence was established! That was, at least, *a triumph for honesty*, a modicum of assurance for the hope of honest success was gained, weak morals were strengthened, and the world was the better for even that.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE "WAYBACK" MORTGAGE. THE FIXEM MEMORANDA. A DAUGHTER OF THE VICKS OF NEW YORK.

An incident very potent in shaping this history, but which occurred long prior to the opening of the story, requires resuscitation. It occurred away back in the early part of this century, and relates to a title to land.

Worthy Hardhand's deed of the Sconset farm was executed to him by one Uriah Heedless and his wife Anne Way. Heedless had obtained his title to the place and the property from old Thomas Wayback. This same Thomas Wayback had two cousins who had gone away, off into the far West, to seek their fortunes ; and at the date referred to, about 1841, were living in a frontier town in the Territory of Wisconsin. Thomas, at this date, planned to visit them, and also to look about there a little for a better place for himself in that wild country. One Lawyer Fixem, of Scars Corners, as Scarborough was then called, being the administrator of an estate to which the two western Waybacks were heirs, was making final settlement and distribution. Administrator Fixem negotiated with Thomas, to carry to the western cousins their portion of the estate ; amounting altogether, to several thousand dollars. As security for the safe delivery of this money given in trust to Thomas Wayback, Lawyer Fixem asked of

Thomas Wayback and Thomas gave to him a mortgage deed of the Sconset farm ; which deed by agreement was to be satisfied and canceled on the return to Fixem, by Wayback, of signed receipts from the two western heirs, for the inherited money. Thomas Wayback did pay the money to the two heirs and took their receipts for it. When he came home, Lawyer Fixem was at the time away in Vermont on business. Thomas put the receipts in an old wallet for safe keeping until Fixem should return ; he hid the wallet away, for it contained other and private papers. Hid it so well, and lost its location so entirely out of his memory, that when he came to look for it, a year later, he could find no trace of it. He wrote to his cousins for duplicate receipts, which they heedlessly postponed sending. Finally one of them died ; the other went farther West, and his whereabouts became unknown to his eastern friends. The money had been duly paid. Thomas Wayback knew that ; Fixem knew it, everybody at interest in the matter knew it, and so the affair rested ; and that Wayback mortgage deed to Fixem, known to have been actually settled, though as a legal formality and force, still uncanceled, was passed quite out of memory and forgotten, until it was unearthed by the Corporation Counsel of the Mill Company, when they took in the Hardhand farm under mortgage foreclosure from Worthy Hardhand. This lawyer immediately and quietly proceeded to straighten out the blunder of the Waybacks. After much correspondence, and with the aid of western agents he found one of the heirs in lower California. The other brother and heir had died intestate, and all his possessions of property and rights had fallen to this

living brother. The latter being in possession of all the papers pertaining to the inheritance from the estate of Fixem's administration, and having his memory of the transaction sharpened by a sight draft of a hundred dollars, payable to him upon his presentation of the desired receipts for the inheritance money at the bank on which the draft was drawn. He obtained the hundred dollars. The bank took his receipts for the inheritance, and they were immediately forwarded to old Lawyer Fixem, who was also at that time the Mill Company's lawyer. A year or more later, old Mr. Fixem having died meantime, an article of cancelation called a *Satisfactum Duces* was obtained from his son and heir, and this cancelation Morris N. Opolee deposited in his safe, and kept there unrecorded. Opolee also exacted for himself and his company, a quit-claim deed from young Fixem of that portion of the farm in their present possession, and permitted the recorded Wayback claim to remain on record against that part of the farm possessed by the widow and John's eight acres.

A second incident, which for its moving spirit goes back to a time just prior to the opening of our story, also deserves attention.

This young lawyer, only son and heir of old Lawyer Fixem, this young Lawyer Fixem, being in a concert hall, in New York, one afternoon and sitting at a wine-table with a peculiarly attractive woman, took out his wallet to pay for something ordered, when a paper fell from it on to the table. Written across the back of the paper were the words "Memoranda relating to the Hardhand property."

The quick eye of the woman noticed it, and she said to him : "What a funny farmer-like name. He must

be what they call ‘a hayseed.’ May I read the paper?” and she reached out her hand for it. Thinking it only a momentary curiosity on her part, and being anxious to be agreeable to her, young Fixem replied: “Certainly; but it is only some business memoranda, and it will all be Dutch to you.”

She ran it over rapidly, made some odd comments on the names Hardhand, Fixem and Wayback, over which he smiled, and then she laughingly suggested: “I suppose your name must be Fixem.” He laughed heartily again now, and being a little addle-pated with his wine, and reckless of consequences, handed her his card. With a little low girlish gurgle of laughter she continued her comments, reading from the card: “Uriah Fixem; so it is. You doubtless make a great flourish when you boldly sign your name: ‘U. Fixem;’ let me see you write it.”

He wrote across the back of the card, “Uriah Fixem, Scarborough, Conn.”

It was very warm in the hall. Fixem was getting dawdlingly drunk. The woman still held the memoranda paper in her hand. “Do you want it?” she asked.

“No,” he replied; “tear it up; here, let me tear it up,” and he reached for it.

“There is a fly in your glass,” remarked the woman.

“Here, waiter,” he called, “shrow zhat out ’nd go gi’me clean glass;” then he mumbled something incoherently about the stupidity of waiters, while she, the woman, slyly slipped the memoranda and the card into her chatelaine bag. In another minute she arose to go from the hall, saying as she did so, “So long;

glad to have met you; do you drop in here often? See you again; so long."

With a rather sickening effort, a silly leer and a blank look of foolishness in his eyes, he caught at her hand which she drew away, while he mumbled, "'Bly for you, birdie; where do ye live? What's y' numb—"

Without any reply, she was gone; and the plotting scheme of Morris N. Opolee was doomed to failure.

Still another incident, prior to the opening of our story, demands consideration, because of its potency in shaping this history.

William Vick, brother of Joel Vick and uncle to Thetty, much after the manner of John Hardhand and from similar cause, working by somewhat different methods, went to New York. This was even before his niece Thetty was born. He had married a sweet and lovely girl before he went—married against the advice of his own and her own friends; for he had even less resources than John Hardhand took with him. William's struggle with poverty was a hard one. Too proud to acknowledge his mistake in not waiting until he was equipped to support a family, he ignored his relatives and friends and fought his battle alone, without their aid or sympathy, until yielding at last, he suffered the death penalty for having given up to despair in his proud poverty.

He was a devoted husband and father. Love fed the souls of this devoted couple. Their love for each other amounted almost to worship. A pretty baby girl was born to them; just one child, no more.

When little Mary was six years old, a girl's most terrible misfortune befell her, *i. e.*, she lost her good mother. With vitality taxed by the anxieties of

poverty, with a body weakened by innutrition, the poor woman suffered from an attack of pneumonia only three days, and the light of life went out. A friend of her husband gave place for her body in his own lot at Ridgewood, and thus saved it from Potter's Field. For which gift the bereft husband in gratitude could have embraced him. William was dumb with grief and could shed no tears. Too poor to hire a house-keeper or even to pay little Mamie's board, she was taken into their private family by some friends of the Opolees, and her board was paid by James Opolee, father of Morris Opolee, the now president and business manager of the Scarborough Mill Company. Mrs. James Opolee charitably looked after little Mamie's clothes, and the child attended the public schools for eight years, or until she was fifteen ; and she became a very proficient scholar, in consideration of her limited opportunities. Graduating at fifteen, she had also acquired much technical information, and was especially expert and skillful at knitting ladies' silk mittens. By doing such work evenings and at spare moments she had been able to buy her own clothing for some time before she left school, and continued this work for several years afterwards. She made frequent presents, as she could, to Mr. and Mrs. Opolee, her benefactors, whom she loved and appreciated, and who in turn had become deeply attached to her. Mamie dressed with exquisite taste, and, perhaps unfortunately, was a very beautiful girl. Going one day just before the Christmas holidays to a bazaar store to dispose of silk mittens which she had made, the manager of the store persuaded her to come and assist them, as saleslady, at the knit-goods counter during the holiday trade.

He would pay her six dollars a week during that time, and fifty cents extra for evening work at the counter. She accepted his offer, liked the independence of self-support, and thereafter took care of herself.

At the end of the first week of her work at the store, she devoted, after paying her board, all the balance of her week's wages to the purchase of presents for Mr. and Mrs. Opolee.

Mamie's store acquaintances were not generally of an elevating or refining character. "The fellows," dances, picnics, and moonlight boating excursions were the chief subjects of their thoughts and conversation. A great miscellaneous mass of girls and women were crowded together in their dressing-room, and in their lunch-room. They talked slang, hummed airs from the vaudeville stage, and not infrequently discussed unclean topics.

A sort of humorous glory of prominence surrounded the most audacious and witty girls, of whom it was a current remark, "O, she is a perfect limb ;" which slang phrase simply meant that she was not afraid to say anything ; yet it was an imperative and universally recognized duty to herself, that if she would not forfeit her privilege and right of association with them, and be promptly cut by all the girls, she must be emphatic of word and expression, that however recklessly she might talk, she would not do anything really bad. Suspicion of evil adventure, however, did not harm "the limb" in the least ; rather gave her pre-eminence, so long as actual evidence or admission of evil conduct did not put upon her the odium which the established custom of ostracizing the fallen has made an imperative female duty.

These girls, in their coming and going from the store, in their service at the counter even, were daily observers of the *demi-monde*. They got to know them almost unfailingly at sight. They noted their catchy adornments of dress, and even of manner, with which such won the attention, even the admiration, of men ; and yet no salesgirl would confess this fact to another, and each quite properly voiced the contempt and hatred with which she regarded the scarlet woman. More is the pity that so many copied her arts, as they really did ; for among this great host of saleswomen, with very few exceptions, there was but one goal : to secure a steady beau, and to make at last of him a husband, and the pillar of a home. They must bait the unwilling or the frightened fish ; tempt him in any way, every way ; with color, form, tone ; appeal to his personal vanity ; for they quickly learned that he was best pleased when they appeared with him in public dressed in their most expensive and elegant attire. They might slyly, and as if by accident, permit indelicate personal contact in taking his arm, in sitting beside him in the car, or in gracefully waving through the waltz,—tempting his passions. Anything not absolutely scandalous and criminal, to win a husband and gain a home. Alas ! that homes are so hard to get, and that they are impossible, to so many good, sweet and otherwise pure and noble women.

Mary had a natural repugnance to this anxious husband-seeking, home-seeking phase of female society, though her heart hungered for a husband's love, and more and more deeply felt the need of a home. She had never had a real home, except in those years of her babyhood. And even that memory had associated

with it the bitterness of poverty ; of a loving, impassioned mother, who in the intensity of her love had kissed her, hugged her to a dying bosom, and had also bathed her with tears ; of a father who took her in his arms, kissed her fondly, repeatedly, a dozen times, expressed his love for her, with a father's tenderness, then set her down and heaved an agonizing sigh. A few months later he came here, to the place where she lived when she had no mother and there was no home, to see her ; it was the last time. He had a terrible look in his face then ; she was afraid of him. Shortly after that they told her he was dead ; that he had died in Bellevue Hospital,—from drink. It was true, he surrendered to despair, and plunged into the hell-haunted stupor of the rum-habit. Whether ambitious students of anatomy gained wisdom from his body, whether his acquaintances gained wisdom from his mistake, or whether his poor wrecked body went whole to Potter's Field, Mary could never learn ; though she sought knowledge with diligence and tears. Still a few years later, Morris N. Opolee, a bright, bold and good-looking young man, and only child of his parents, made love to Mary Vick. To Mary Vick, who had been his father's *protégée* and ward, whom his mother loved almost as if she were her own child ; about whose temptation and dangers she had talked so much, felt such extreme anxiety, worried and really trembled.

Morris N. Opolee "made love" to poor Mary. It was just made-love, it was not natural, spontaneous, outgoing love. But how could she know that, since he was so gentle and generous and handsome, since he was profuse in his demonstrations of love ? And that sweet word, "Love," from his lips, fell on her ear

with an effect like that of the gurgling swirl, the pleasant splash, of a waterfall heard by a sand-blinded, way-lost traveler in life's desert. Her heart went out to him ; how she extolled his every virtue and merit ! Ah, he would marry her ; she should have a home ; have the blessing and parental regard of her erstwhile benefactors, his father and mother ! She thought all this. She closed her lips hard, lest she should shout aloud, "Ah, at last, joy, unspeakable !" And she did open her lips to say, "Yes, Morris, I am yours."

He had deceived her ; he wrought her ruin ; he forsook her.

She did not kill him. She did not herself die of her anguish ; death would not mercifully come, though she prayed for it. O, how merciless is death ! She lived. Her child, his son, lived.

His father and mother, who loved and pitied her, died, filled with sorrow for her, and shame for him. The rest of the world looked black at her, and cursed her, and passed by on the other side. She went out into a hateful world alone. Her child she placed where she could see him, kiss him, and then go away to cry. But he should not know that she was his mother. She would forever spare him that blight, sweet little innocent fellow ; at least she then thought she would spare him. Later, a time came, in the lonely bitterness of her soul, when she could not resist the drawings of mother-love, and yielding to the overpowering temptation, she took him in her arms and said to him, "Willie, I am your poor lonely, forsaken, wicked mother. You will *pity* me, won't you ? Though you cannot respect me nor love me ?" She heard him just that once, say, "*My mother !*" Then she took him

away, where he should not see her again, and went back down into the wallow where beastly men hold riot. Where her kind purchase means to live, and costly clothes and empty follies. Where the fallen one gets to wish she had been born a cleaner animal than one of the inhuman human race, a species of which she sees only the beastly side, in the wallow where her "lot" is cast.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“BOOMING” PROGRESS. THE SCIENCE OF CROWDING. THE WAY OF THE WORLD. LORD JOHN.

IN beginning this chapter, we step forward over the events of three years of the history of friends and acquaintances which we have made in the former pages. Three years, with all its changes in the affairs of life, the relations of individuals to each other and their relations to society. Changes of peculiar interest; momentous in their influence and effect;—enough, more than enough material for another and larger book than this. Yet we will omit its careful detail, that we may the sooner overtake and consider the demolishing and the upbuilding consequences of thought and acts already recorded in the simple life history which has composed the previous chapters.

Having taken this three years stride forward in time, let us now pause to consider some of the changes wrought in that period.

Scarborough, with its tradesmen, small manufacturers, and a total population of about twenty-five hundred persons when our story began, has now become a considerable city, with a population of more than fifteen thousand. Scarborough has become, in these few intervening years, at once a city, and also one of the great centers of New England manufactur-

ing enterprise. Like the branchless trunks of a burned forest, the chimneys of its numerous factories tower up into the smoke-laden air, dark and grimy. Its population, requiring space on which to work, and homes in which to live, have made the earth's area in that vicinity needful, desirable and valuable. The increased value of building lots has made many a hitherto poor landowner very rich. Rich, without any effort or labor of his own in the production of his suddenly acquired wealth. Rich in power to appropriate to himself the productions of the labor of other men, who must occupy his (?) property in God's earth, at, or about Scarborough. By the rapid growth in population and by the increased and increasing needs of the people of Scarborough, he has become almost suddenly possessed of power to legally appropriate to himself some, or much of the wealth which they produce ; appropriate it in either of two or more ways.

He may yield them permission to use his space on the earth at a fixed price, a definite amount to be paid him in the product of the labor done on the space, or its equivalent ; so much monthly in advance, or quarterly, or annually, together with power also on his part to increase their tribute duty to him at the end of the month, quarter or year, if the need of the working producer and the increased volume or value of the productions will admit of the larger exaction. That method of exacting tribute, of acquiring personal revenue, is called collecting rent. The rental value of space, location only, is called "ground-rent," to distinguish it from the rent of buildings and of other property of personal production, which, in fact, is not rent at all, though it is erroneously called so, but is really interest

on the capital which has been employed by labor, and embodied in them by the labor of producing them.

Another way the Scarborough landowner has found by which to appropriate wealth, without the trouble of producing it, is to sell or transfer ownership in his piece of the earth. The selling price is not at all difficult to determine—it is capitalized rent. Thus,—if the present productive power of the occupancy and use of any particular space is known, and the carefully estimated ratio of its increasing productive power so well foretold as to meet the assent of the needing buyer,—put those two factors together, *i. e.*, the value of its annually capable production now, and the entire value of what it may be hoped or expected to produce in the future, for an indefinitely long time; then from the sum of the value of these two factors deduct enough of the product to keep the producing workers upon it alive, so that they can continue producing; deduct something also for the element of risk on the part of the buyer and a little margin perhaps for over-sanguine speculation on the future of it,—and there you are—that is the selling price.

Sometimes Scarborough sellers of land were not sufficiently careful in their estimates, or made too liberal allowances to the buyer for risk, or for the cost of supporting the wealth producers on it; then the buyer got what he called “a bargain,” and went his way and boasted. On the other hand, the seller sometimes estimated and deducted from the gross possible productions so little for the support of the producers upon it that no buyer dared take it. Such an owner of land, being more than ordinarily sanguine of increasing need for the use of his lots, “held them for a rise in value,”

as the needs of the people for its *use* should increase. Now, the selling price was, as the reader will observe, equivalent to a purchase in advance of the product—not of labor already done on the land, but—of labor yet to be done in the years that should follow.

The price of a human chattel, a slave, or of an animal chattel, is not determined on what it has already produced,—which is actual and is already possessed by some one,—but is determined on what it has power to produce and probably will produce in the future,—which is potential.

Thus also with the price of permission to use Scarborough space and opportunity on the earth. Though not because the space without a working man on it would produce any *more* wealth than formerly, or any wealth; but because the working man desired and needed space there on which to work and live. He could not live without it. And to own the space which he must have was the very best and cheapest form of ownership of the working man himself. Not the useless, idle ownership of land,—which land in Scarborough would produce no good thing naturally, or as we say wild,—but ownership of the man who could and would if he lived and used that space, produce something desirable, which the owner of the space could and would take from him.—Take by authority of law, and with that right also confirmed by social sanction and well-nigh universal consent.

Therefore it became very desirable to own lots in Scarborough, and the competition became so intense, to obtain possession of such excellent opportunities to take the productions of producers without the trouble of producing, that the price of *opportunities* to live,—

spaces—lots, was run away up to grossly absurd figures ; figures in very many cases, so high that no user of space would consider them ; but which the owner, in his zeal of hopefulness, deemed rationally possible to exact some time, and so he “held it” awaiting the bitterer *needs* of Scarborough ; speculating on the future of Scarborough, and put a fence around it, or put up a sign : “No TRESPASSING ALLOWED HERE,” and waited. Would wait until Scarborough people *must have it* to live on, and would be obliged to accept his terms.

Thus all the land of Scarborough was rented, or sold, or held idle and out of use for purposes of speculation. Indeed, more than two-thirds of the area within the corporate limits of the city was held at prices so high, that no one could buy it, and, from his productions after paying the rent or the capitalized rent, have enough left on which to live and continue producing. So it happened, that one-third-used and two-thirds-idle Scarborough, has become what is called “over-crowded.” And they have been buying and renting spaces along up Sconset-road, and building factories and residences there.

High Street, on the hill, has become too near the smoking chimneys and the noise and squalor of working-people.

Mr. Lord has selected a desirable building-site on the old Hardhand farm, and has built upon it a sixty thousand dollar house, an elegant stable, hot-houses and other elegant and pleasurable surroundings,—to this, his new home. He drives from it to the Borough,—down pretty Sconset-road, every morning. Other members of the Mill Company have bought from that corporation villa sites at Sconset, and have built, or are pre-

paring to build, pretty and expensive residences on them.

John's twelve acres including, as it does, the old home-stead, which is the choicest building-site on the farm, has become the cynosure of all aristocratic villa seekers. Standing on a gently sloping knoll, the highest elevation on "the lake shore," as the borderland of the mill reservoir is now called, it is much-coveted ground. Many cautious approaches have been made, many "business feelers," as they are termed, thrown out, in the hope that he would name a price for it. John has chosen to *wait*. John has waited quite like the owners of the unused two-thirds of Scarborough. But he yielded a little at last. He needed money; for he needed Thetty, and he knew that Thetty should not and could not be wife, housekeeper, a home-maker for him, and at the same time earn a living in the railroad company's office at Scarborough. So John staked off the least desirable one acre of his twelve, and which was yet more desirable than any one acre owned by the mill company. Having laid it out in lots comporting with streets already surveyed and mapped, he sold one—a middle lot—for five hundred and forty dollars. An architect proceeded at once to plan and build upon it an elegant house. Shortly afterward, John was offered seven hundred and fifty dollars for a lot near the one first sold. He asked eight hundred. The home-seeker would not pay it. But two months later, came again and offered to accept John's proposal.

John answered him, "No; that was two months ago; a dozen men have offered me that price since, without avail. I will sell you that lot to-day for eight hundred and fifty dollars, and no less."

"Why?" retorted the buyer, "why, Farmer Hard-hand, you have not improved that land at all since I saw it last; nor built a road, nor removed a stone, nor paid a tax."

"If you do not need it," replied John, "enough to be willing to now pay me the price I ask for it, you will be glad to do so soon, or some other man will be; you are not obliged to take it, if you don't want it."

The buyer took it then, and went his way boasting of his bargain.

Thus, one after another, the lots were sold. The corner lots last, and at famous prices. That one acre netted John seven thousand two hundred and forty dollars. He expended nine hundred dollars of it in overhauling, modernizing and beautifying the old farm-house.

Then John traded a half acre of the homestead land, for four acres of land a half-mile nearer Scarborough, but with its frontage four hundred feet back from Sconset road, and he received also a cash bonus of two hundred and fifty dollars. The four acre lot was an excellent bit of grass land, from which to cut hay, and would admit of the use of the home meadow now, for pasturage for the cow. Larger range, more plentiful feed,—for the cow.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CLIMAX OF OPOLEE'S PLOT. FATHER AND SON. THE HOUR OF "HER" TRIUMPH." "LOOK ON AN HONEST MAN!"

PAUL was married : to whom do you think ? To Kitty McAuliffe ; more than a year ago. Two months after Paul's marriage, Mother Hardhand died and went to the first actual rest she had ever had, since with Worthy, they began their struggle on the Sconset farm. May *Heaven* shower treasures of blessing on them ! Alas ! that the people of this world showered on them so few, and fed them with so much of bitterness in their toil and tears.

Paul and Kitty came to the home to live with John, and Kitty was housekeeper for both the brothers,—bright, busy, refined, joyous Kitty. Whether Protestant parson or Catholic priest approved or not, they did not keep those two loving hearts apart. Paul and Kitty were drawn toward each other by a very "natural selection," and they were very happy.

Paul at one time came very near losing her, because he was so impatient of the forms of her way of worship, that he mocked them. Then she in turn pointed to the grotesque follies, also, in his way of worship, and to the bigotry of his creed, and they parted in anger. Six months she pined and pouted, and heard through the kindly gossip of other girls how miserable, too, he was. But he, silent and uncommunicative, thought

she was lost to him forever. He was dumb, pale, almost insane. He went to and came from his work, like a somnambulist ; seeing everything, sensing nothing. His conceit was quite crushed out of him. His pride at last gave way. The rock of his self-consciousness was rent at last. He went to her and begged for her forgiveness ; which she promptly granted, and never told him that if he had but stood out a little longer, she would have come to him to plead for his forgiveness. So she will have always what Yankees call "the upper hand," of him. In this peculiar case, that is the best that could have happened for both them.

During the last days of Mother Hardhand's illness she was a great sufferer. Thetty Vick took the hazard of sacrificing her position in the Railroad Company's office. She wrote the superintendent that her duty to a sick and very dear friend made it impossible for her to come to the office until the end of Mrs. Hardhand's life, which was certainly but a few days off at the farthest. Day and night she was beside the invalid, held her hand, smoothed the gray hair and warmed the dying heart with the comfort of her love, and the delicacy of her kind service.

One evening, when John came in and bent over his mother to kiss her, she whispered with a consumptive's hoarseness, "My son, sit down by me." He sat down in the only chair near her pillow, and held her thin bony hand in his. With her other hand, she motioned Thetty to come to her, and held her lips pressed hard together, so as to prevent another spasm of coughing. She took Thetty's hand in hers and lifting it to her lips kissed it. Then, still holding Thetty's hand, she pressed John's hand to her lips and held it there while

she closed her eyes as if in prayer. Then she brought their two hands together, and they involuntarily closed around each other, and thus clasped together, she lifted them to her lips again, and kissed them. She opened her lips and whispered, "Daughter of my heart; son of my heart," and she looked upward, "may God bless you." He raised Thetty's hand to his lips and reverently kissed it. She took his two cheeks between the palms of her hands and kissed him heartily as she should. Two days later Mrs. Hardhand died. Yesterday, nearly a year after Mother Hardhand went out of the old homestead forever, Thetty Vick went through the ceremony which law and custom requires, and became Mrs. Hardhand.

By virtue of certain representations of authority, and of certain legal forms and papers duly made and presented, John Hardhand, a few days prior to his marriage, was thrown into a very terrifying dilemma. His employer, Mr. Opolee, has for some time past, possibly dating from John's financial gains in Sconset land, though we cannot be exact about that, been very respectful toward and very considerate of his hired hand, the erstwhile farmer, John.

As John was about to hasten off from his work to catch the car on the electric road which runs up to Sconset now, Mr. Opolee has frequently said to him : "Jump into the carriage, John, and ride up with *me*, and you can so save yourself the time and trouble of walking down after dinner to get a book from the library." One day, Mr. Opolee sent for John to come to his office an hour or so before it was time to quit his work, and on that occasion the head of the Opolee Mill Company appeared nervous and uneasy.

That same day, Maggie Vick had seen "She," walking through the street at Scarborough.

Opolee had several times asked John to name a selling price for his property on "Lakeside Knob," as the new-comers now called John's location. John had pleasantly but decidedly declined to do so, and seemed to take a little satisfaction in his new relation to his employer, as he more and more clearly discovered Mr. Opolee's anxious greed to possess Lakeside Knob. As John came into the office now, again Mr. Opolee led the conversation around to the same subject, and made a slightly better proposal than he had made at any time heretofore. Again John declined to consider it, and retorted by saying to Mr. Opolee,

"Your offer is less than two-thirds the price I have been already offered by two other persons who desire the property."

"Very well, Hardhand, I have given you the very best offer I can make for the property, with its *clouded title*."

"What do you mean?" John anxiously inquired.

To which Opolee paid no attention, but continued, "which may, and probably will end in the total loss of my interest, and the interest of the Mill Company, in that farm property."

"What do you mean?" again asked John.

"This will explain what I mean," he answered, with aggravating coolness, as he carefully unfolded a searcher's abstract of title from the record of deeds and pointed with his finger to the unsatisfied record of the Wayback deed.

"By heavens," said John, "if that is correct——"

"It is correct," interposed Opolee.

"If that is correct," concluded John, "it is much to you, and everything to me."

"It is much to me," replied Mr. Opolee, "yet because I don't want to see you lose anything, I will take the risk of losing all I put into it, and will give you for your quit-claim deed of it the sum I have just now mentioned to you."

"Let me consider it, for a day or two?" asked John.

"Very well, Hardhand, until this hour of Thursday. Day after to-morrow, in this place. Meet me here, with the papers, or my offer will close then, and forever."

John stopped at Lawyer Fixem's on his way to the car. Fixem gave him very little definite information on the features of greatest anxiety to him, but advised him to go on his way contentedly. "Opolee will pay you at any time the price he has offered. Thursday night or next Fourth of July or at any other time when you will consent to take it, don't fret," said the lawyer.

But John did fret. He thought Fixem did not fully appreciate the appalling facts of the situation, or he must certainly be a fool, or must regard Mr. Opolee as one.

When John dropped in at the Sconset Post-office on his way home next evening, he received a letter in an entirely unknown handwriting, and it bore this strange and peculiar message :

"Prepare the quit-claim deed to Opolee, leaving the consideration,—the price—blank. Meet him at the place and hour appointed. Do not execute the deed, nor write in the price, until the writer of this communication enters there, examines and approves the paper and gives consent. The writer will be accompanied by a relative of Mr.

Opolee. You will recognize the family likeness perfectly. You will also recognize me. I have done you good service before, and am only too happy in being able to render you this particular service now. For prudential reasons, all in your own interest, better not to know my name until I meet you there. Be of good cheer, and trust me.

“I find infinite satisfaction in presuming to sign myself,
“YOUR FRIEND.”

It was mailed from Scarborough. John thought of Boniface, of his New York lawyer, of Mr. North. Quite impossible that any one of them should write him from Scarborough. Beside, what could they do to remove the record of a deed that could, probably would, reduce him to dependent beggary again. He could think of no one in Scarborough to whom he might reasonably attribute this volunteered service. It was so emphatic in both command and promise that he would at least obey; no harm could come of the caution required.

He went to Fixem's next morning, on his way to the factory. Quite to his surprise, Fixem had the blanks ready at hand and nearly filled in, when he called; only lacking boundary descriptions, and some other information which John supplied from the papers he had brought for that purpose. John had reached the factory with the unsigned deed to Opolee in his pocket and was at his work before ten o'clock A.M.

At the appointed hour that afternoon,—five o'clock,—washed, and tidily appareled, John entered Mr. Opolee's office. He found there with Mr. Opolee, awaiting his coming, a new Scarborough lawyer, of quickly-won celebrity. This lawyer had recently made a famous hit and reputation, in resurrecting and

establishing an old title to a valuable bit of land in the very center of Scarborough. His presence boded no good to John. The latter was sure of that.

"Have you the papers with you?" asked Mr. Opolee promptly.

"Yes, sir," John replied.

"Let me see them."

John handed them to him.

"Why have you not written in the price?"

"I want a little more consideration of the matter," John replied.

"I shall give it no further," responded Opolee.

"I think," suggested John, "that you should at least offer me what others have offered."

"I know what I am doing, and they do not. If you refuse this, my last offer, I shall immediately make the facts known to them, and to the public, which will destroy their ambitions, and, at the same time, make impossible any further negotiations for the property on my part. Do you accept my offer?"

"Will you not make it two thousand dollars more?"

"No; decidedly no."

"Will you give me another day to think it over?"

"No, no; it can do *no* good. I am decided. If you will not accept my offer to help you, why then, accept your fate."

The office boy entered and announced, "A lady wishes to see you, Mr. Opolee."

"Ask her," he replied, "to be seated outside there for a moment. I am occupied with some important business and will be out presently."

A rustle of the lady's dress was distinctly heard outside the door. Mr. Opolee arose and closed the door

gently; continuing his conversation, meanwhile, he said to John, "I have offered you thus, in gratuity, several thousand dollars which you could not and cannot otherwise get. If you refuse, I shall be exonerated from all blame of having made you *again, a penniless, dependent, hired man.*"

The door swung quickly open. A graceful, elegantly dressed woman entered, accompanied by a lad of fifteen years, and closed the door behind her. Opolee looked,—turned deathly pale,—crushed and rumpled the unsigned deed, as with spasmotic nervousness his hand closed on the paper. He gasped,—and with startling, hissing breath he uttered the one word, "Mary!" John, too, was startled, and looked alarmed. It was "She."

With her hand gently and affectionately resting on the lad's shoulder, she pushed him before her until the two stood immediately near to, and confronting Mr. Opolee. They paused there, silently. The full truth of the situation flashed across John's mind. Turning her face then full upon John, she said to him, in that sad melodious voice he twice before had heard, "Do you recognize me?"

"I do," he answered, and he held out his hand to her and said earnestly: "I wish to thank you for your kindness to me, once, when I needed a friend."

She whispered half audibly, "Wait, and you shall see if I am capable of a good deed." Then turning to Opolee, who sat looking into the boyish sweet face of the lad, a face in duplicate of his own—in his innocent days,—she said, "Morris Opolee, look on your son. If you had been blest or cursed with other children than this one, for their sake and the sake of your wedded

wife, I would have spared you this. Understand me, for their sake. Not now. Let me see that deed." He shook perceptibly and hesitated. She continued,— "How dare you attempt to rob this man or threaten to plunge him back into penury and dependence on *you*?"

"Mary, I assure you, if I never did a good deed before, this that I offer to do for him, is one. I offer to him thousands of dollars in gratuity, for a title that is not worth the wasted ink and paper with which it is written. I do it just in merciful kindness."

"Liar! Villain still! Is it impossible for you to be true to one honorable sentiment, one noble, unselfish purpose? *Here*, look at *this*," and she drew from the bosom of her dress the memoranda made and signed by Uriah Fixem, detailing all the facts relating to the satisfaction and cancellation of the Wayback mortgage deed. Those papers which Lawyer Fixem supposed destroyed years ago, and which he had doubtless quite forgotten. She held them in her hand before him, while Opolee glanced them over. Then she handed them to John.

"Hand me that deed," said she to Opolee. He handed it to her, and arose from his seat to do so. She immediately drew the chair under her, sat down at *his* desk and picked up *his* pen. He stood back of her chair.

"Can I see those papers?" said the famous lawyer to John. John had read them over carefully.

"Yes, sir, but you must return them to *me*, not to your client."

"I will, sir," and he took them.

Laying down the pen with which she had commenced

to write in the figures in the deed, she turned to Opolee, and in a tone of command not to be questioned, said to him, "Where are those receipts from the Wayback heirs, and that quit-claim deed from Fixem?"

"In my safe."

"Get them, and give them to me."

He did so promptly, as if he were covered with a revolver. She took them, and handed them to John. The famous lawyer gave him back the Fixem memoranda, shrugged his shoulders, *a la François*, arose, and was about to go.

"Stay," said she ; "*he*," pointing to Opolee, "and *we*, shall need you." The lawyer sat down again. Then picking up the pen, and turning to John, she said : "John Hardhand, name your price for Lakeside Knob, which this man has tried to rob from you. Include in it also the balance of the Hardhand farm, that the corporation of which this man is president plundered from your good, worthy father and mother." She hesitated : "A hundred thousand dollars ; a hundred and fifty ; two hundred—"

"Mary!" ejaculated Opolee.

"Be silent!" and she stamped her foot ; "two hundred and fifty? more?" And she prepared to write in the sum, waiting only for John to *name* it.

"Hear me," spoke John, "I cannot return evil and injustice because I have suffered both, without harm to myself. I, nor you, my good friend, must not take *our* advantage to wrong him, because he has sought advantage to wrong you, and to wrong myself. Lakeside Knob is not for sale to Mr. Opolee."

She laid down the pen, and rising, said, "Morris

Opolee, look on an honorable man, and bow your head with shame in his presence. Willie," turning to the lad, "look!" The boy gazed at John with a confused sense of the situation, slightly bowed, and the two walked out.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM JUST PLAIN FOLKS. LORD JOHN AWAKENING. OLD BAT PROVES HIS FRIENDSHIP.

"You had better begin the work at noon to-morrow, I think. The sewer-pipe will arrive in a few days and it will be best and safest to get it into the ground and out of reach as soon as possible, for it is easily broken." This was John Hardhand's reply to Mr. Bartholomew McAuliffe's inquiry.'

"When does ye want me to come to wurruck, Mishter Haardhand?"

The new Lake Shore road at the foot of Knob Hill, ran along beside the wrinkling ripples of the great Mill reservoir. Ran along exactly parallel with and about four hundred feet away from old Sconset road at the top of the hill, where the old Hardhand homestead still stood. Stood *now*, in its bright new dress of paint and added modern decorations. Some century plants, a palm in a great red-painted tub, an iron dog, painted to imitate bronze, and one of the "new fads," a tripod and gypsy kettle, ornamented the lawn about the house, and had entirely displaced the homely flowers of the olden time.

John had surveyed and laid out two cross roads from the main road down to the Lakeside drive; thus plotting what might be called in a city, two blocks of land, containing the usual number of building lots.

He proposed to add to the desirability of these lots by some work of his own ; or rather, by the work of *hired hands*, whom he would pay out of the funds remaining from the sale of lots already referred to.

He was about to lay a main sewer of earthen pipe along Sconset road, and branch sewers running from it down each of the two new streets, to finally empty into the Lake. Old Bat was to direct the work, and execute John's plans. Jimmy McGurk's team, with Terrence to drive, would haul the dirt and pipes about, and Jimmy's cousin, the greenhorn, Roger Ryan, as a laborer also would assist old Bat.

Mr. McAuliffe had gone to John's home, immediately after the latter's arrival from the factory, to talk over details of the proposed work.

"I will be down your way, after supper," John remarked, "for I want to see Jimmy about the team ; and perhaps I will drop in at your house on my way back. Sit down, Bat, and have supper with us ?"

"Do, father," said Kitty, from the pantry door.

"And then we will walk down together," John continued.

"No, thank the two o' yees, but me old ooman, Hiven bless and purchect er,—she'd not ate a bite nor drink a sop entil her auld mon kem to sit down wid her. I'm obliged to ye, but I'll be goin'—an I'll see ye afther ; eh, John ?"

Roger Ryan, was standing outside by the gate when John reached their place, and saluted him with almost royal deference.

"Good evenin', yer honor. 'Tis a foine day, sor. May de blessin' o' God be wid ye ; sure, Jimmy do be tellin' me as ye wants an able mon to worruk in

de ditches ; an uv it plaze ye, I'd be verry glad o' the chance. I knows well how to do that same ; ditchin an' beddin petatees I did be doin' shure all me life since I wor a brat of a b'y, no begger nor thot," holding his hand out about four feet above the ground.

"Have you a spade, Roger?"

"Hev I a shpade? Ax me hev I an appetite; shure I was borrun wid a shpade in me mouth."

"Ah, ha! ha! ha!" laughed John, "very well, you come up to the house to-morrow at noon. Bring up the spade, and the appetite for work, and bring along the mouth for entertainment. Mr. McAuliffe will direct you how best to use the three."

"I'm verry grateful to ye, Meshter Hardhand."

"Grateful for what, my good man?"

"Fer givin' me the job shure, an fy not; me cousins are very good to me, bless dhem, an' I'm quite welcome; bit I don't like to be givin' dhem de sarvice o' me appetite an payin' dhem wid me mouth, while de rusht do be thickenin' on me shpade; an I find it as haard uvereel bit, to git a job in Americy as it is at home."

"Very well, Roger; but I don't see that *I* have any claim upon your gratitude. You will do some work for me that I do not desire to do myself. I will pay you for doing it, less than *I* would accept for doing the work, or otherwise I should do it myself. And if there is a balance of gratitude due between us and unpaid, I am certainly *your* debtor."

They walked into the house and from thence with Jimmy over to old Bat's. It happened that some Irish friends of the McAuliffes were there before them, and their pleasant chatter and laughter was not an uninviting element of the entertainment. Mrs. McMahon,

Mrs. Donnelly and her daughter, and a recently arrived relative, a young woman, from the same county that gave to the world old Bat, were there. Their chatter quieted down as John and his party entered. The men gathered about John and discussed the proposed improvements at Knob Hill. John, with none of that unsocial reserve which commonly characterizes such associations, for self-consciousness was no part of his nature, counseled with these men, and joined heartily in that free fellowship which wins the hearts of any who are worth making our friends. The men in their corner and the women in theirs, were soon as busy with their tongues, and as free from restraint as if John himself had been born in County Arlone, instead of Sconset.

John had a writing-pad, and with a pencil, was making an estimate of the total cost of the proposed improvements. He was also approximating an estimate of the addition to the selling price of the lots that this improvement would give to them.

So much the sewerage would cost. So much more, because of the sewers would each lot bring. So many lots would be benefited, and the gross sum amounted to more than five times the cost of the sewers. He heard Mrs. McMahon in subdued voice, saying to old Bat's wife :—

“ Shure, Mishter Haardhand is a fine pooblic-shperited mon ; an’ McMahon was sayin’ to me thish day week, whin he fursht heard of the pipes an the ditchin’, that ef there were more o’ the likes o’ him, to be givin worruk to the poor, the times would be aisy, be gorra, yis, aisy. Faith he’s de fine mon, so he is, Mrs. McAuliffe.”

"An' he isn't shtuck up at all, but as kind and friendly wid wan as anodther," put in Mrs. Donnelly.

And the young woman greenhorn whispered to Mrs. McAuliffe, "An' sure he's not a Laerd dhin, be *that* token. An' if he isn't a *Laerd*, how do he be givin the worruk?"

"Well, I'll tell ye," replied Mrs. McAuliffe, ".He's ownin' dhe besht bit o' property in Schkonset, what they calls Knob Hill. It's got in a few years to be vurry vallyble."

"Be dhe ditchin' an' culteevatin' and sich, I suppose," said the new-comer from over the sea.

"No," replied Mrs. McAuliffe, "no, be the—be the—be the—bother me head; I can't tell ye be what it got vallyble; eh, Bat, me good mon, come hither a bit." Bat arose from among the group of men and walked over to her. "Whisht!" said she, and he bent down his head, as she whispered in a loud buzzing tone. "Say, Bat, what do be makin' the Knobs Hill so vallyble an' Mr. Haardhand so rich?"

"Begorry, I'll tell ye, Honora, 'tis the power to take the mutton."

"But ye tould me often, Bat, that same was what drove yer couSEN Mary to dhe bad, an' druv *Fe* away from dhe home, an' fed worrukin' min on schkant petaties while gentlemen Laerds folleed dhe hounds an' fattened wid game, and shure *John is a worrukin' mon* in dhe mills, an' as good as an angil from Hivin."

"It is not his goodness, Honora, nor kindness nor worruk has med him rich, but has kept him poor an' sufferin'. 'Tis the power to take the mutton from thim as uses Knob Hill as has med him rich."

"Papa dear," whispered Mrs. Paul Hardhand, who

had just come in to return a borrowed pickling-kettle to the mother, "Papa, dear, don't whisper so loudly. Though Mr. Hardhand is busy with his pencil, he hasn't laid aside his ears, and he will hear you."

John had his back toward them and was bent over the writing-pad at the table. But Kitty had noticed that the pencil was idle, his head did not move, and that he seemed to be listening. When old Bat went back to the group of men at the table, John reached for his hand and gave it a most earnest shake and pressure, which made the old man feel almost guilty of having done him some undeserved injury. But before the evening was gone John found an opportunity to assure him that he had done him a great kindness.

Jimmy and Roger arose and departed. Old Bat and John sat there for a long time together in earnest conversation by themselves. John said in a quiet, confidential tone to him, "Mr. McAuliffe, do you not believe I am your friend?"

"Shure I do, Meshter Haardhand, fy not? I counts yer thot, an' none bether."

"Will you tell me why you left your home on that beautiful island over the sea, and came to this land of strangers and strange ways?"

"Faith, it's a long shtory; it 'ud bother ye widout annee profit, John."

"Don't be too sure of that, Bat. I want to know; it will help me to solve a troublesome problem; I am sure of it."

"I am yer frind, John Haardhand; I wouldn't do ye harrum, nor hurt yer body, nor yer harrut, fer de price o' me life. So, if I do bring out a misery-makin' coat, that look like it were yours, don't put it on, fer it never

'll fit ye. An' ef ye puts it on, ye'll never wear it fer long ; it's agin yer natur to.

"In the countyshire I kem from dhere do be ownin' all the land about, several Laerds, two o' dhem lives dhere in der castles, an' more o' them do live in England over the channel. Dhe landed eshtates be divided up among dhe tinantry in little paircels, an' de rents be so high an' de tithes so heavy that little is left afther dhem fer de worruk' poor. Me faather hed nine childer, five b'y's and four gerruls, an' I was de eldest wan o' dhem all. Two or three milch goats an' a pig we kept, an' a shcore o' sheep. We did rake leaves, an' gather weeds from the sayshore to mingnure the meddys fer hay, and the pastures to feed the sheep. Uveree wan uv uz worruk'd as haard as we cud, an' it was petatees we ate, an' not enough o' dim, an' de pork o' de wan pig, fer if we had two, dhe odther musht go to markit. Not tin times in all me life 'till I kem to Americy, did I tashte mutton.

"Uveree year from nine to fifteen fine fat sheep or lambs wint to Liverpool or to London markets fer money to pay the rent. Pay rent to him as did,—as did,—*nothin'* but own the land an' eat the mutton and follee the hounds. An' I seen, that it werrn't dhe title o' Laerd that gave dhem dhe power to take our mutton, but the title to land. And to the tinantry, to-day, to-morry and foriver, only to *worruk*, was the lot o' de rinters, an' go hungry, and give the mutton to dhim as has the power to take it.

"I couldn't do worse, an' I might do bether,—fer de place wouldn't fatten dhe mutton and feed us all,—so I married Honora an' kem over to Americy."

"Well, my friend, I cannot see that you are much better off here."

"Faith, I am dhin," the old man replied, "though I haven't egschaped the laerds; there be crumbs as fall off dheir tables in dhis braad land they're too lazy or careless to pick up; and wan o' dhem is dhe bit o' land alongside the railroad tracks.

"I bothered meself an' Honora, wid shtugglin' an' tryin' fer mony a year, a tryin' to buy, an' so be a laerd meself; bit I seen as little laerds like Jimmy McGurk an' sich wus no better than no laerds at all, for dhe power to take the mutton from dhim was always wid de bigger laerds, an' dhey gettin' bigger an' fewer. So I picked up the crumbs be the railroad track, where the laerds do forget to ashk fer the mutton I raishe wid me worruk, an' so I think meself well to do, an' am very contint."

"What do you think of *my* position, Bat?" asked John. "Am not I a lord in my little way? As much a lord and as bad a lord as the lords of Arlone? Don't hesitate to tell me what you think, my friend. It is the way to prove your friendship for me."

But the eccentric old fellow did hesitate in very evident embarrassment. He looked inquiringly at John's face for a moment and then asked:

"An' ye won't be mod, nor think me less a frind, John?"

"Only the more respect you for telling me what you believe to be true."

"Very well, dhin, John, ye are a sorry mixture o' laerd an' worrukin' mon. As a worrukin' mon, ye are a blessin' to dhe worruld. As a frind an' neighbor, ye are one o' God's nobilitee. As the

laerd o' Knob Hill an' the acres down Sconset road, ye may uf ye will, an' ye probably will, take the mutton o' dhim as worruks an' raises it. Fer, as I've mony a time said, an' know, it isn't the nod o' the Queen, nor the power of a name that makes a laerd, but dhe power to take the mutton, and dhe power to take dhe mutton is dhe curse o' dhe worruld. It has druv to crime dhim as, seein' dhe aise o' dhe rich, has, be wrongdoin' an' fightin', shtruggled fer that same power. Et has ground to poverty, need, misery, prostitution, an' all manner o' evil ways fer to live, dhim as hasn't dhe power to take dhe mutton nor dhe place to raise it.

"Aye, a laerd, me frind, ye are,—though ye don't know it nor mane it, an' will be mod fer me tellin' ye; ye are a curse to dhe worruld o' worrukin' min an' women an' childer. Fergive me fer tellin' ye."

John Hardhand took the old man's hand in his own and shook it heartily as he said to him, "Mr. McAuliffe, I thank you. You have done me the greatest kindness."

After they had talked over the details of their plans for work next day on the sewers, John took his departure.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DISCUSSION BETWEEN WORKING-MEN, PRODUCER AND PRODUCT. RIGHTS AND WRONGS. SOME EVIL CONSEQUENCES. THE END.

SINCE Paul's marriage to Kitty McAuliffe they had been living at the Hardhand homestead. By their more intimate association after Thetty came into the homestead as John's wife, the two women had become even more than formerly attached to each other, and the two families were very happy together. Despite this fact, Paul, being less social than the others, and possessed of the quite worthy desire to have a distinct home of his own, proposed to buy a lot from John and build upon it, near the old home. He had selected the site he desired and John was hesitating, with no little embarrassment, as to the price he should name for it.

On the evening next following John's talk with old Bat, he came into the house with a legal document which he signed, Thetty signed, and then the notary signed and acknowledged. John with the document in his hand, turning toward Kitty, who was much mystified by the unintelligible proceeding, said, "Kitty, if you will give me a dollar in the presence of these friends, I will give you this paper."

With a sly wink Thetty signified to Kitty her wish that the latter should promptly comply with John's pro-

position. Kitty stepped to the bureau, opened a little tin box, and returning to the party, handed John a bright new silver dollar; and John gave her a deed, executed to Mrs. Kate Hardhand. A deed of the lot Paul had selected.

Kitty laughed hysterically. Then she ran to John, impulsively grasped his burly shoulders and tried to shake him as she gave him a hearty kiss and exclaimed, "John Hardhand, you horrid creature. Why did you do that?"

"To pay a debt of gratitude that I owe to your father. He never would have permitted me to reward him, and so I pay it to you. He will not be angry with me because of a little kindness done to his Katy, my brother's wife."

After supper, John, Paul and the girls, as they called their wives, sat at the table a long time discussing plans for a homelike house to be built on Paul's lot. "*Paul's lot*;" insisted Katy, "all that is mine is Paul's and all that is Paul's is mine, aren't we one?"

While the girls were, as they styled it, "doing up the dishes," John detailed to Paul the whole history of his conversation with old Bat; the old man's philosophy of the man who takes the mutton. And the two brothers dropped into a conversation and discussion that continued for a half-hour. It was a peculiar conversation, for in it was expressed the convictions of two intelligent workingmen. However absurd their reasoning may appear to the reader, I think, now that the reader knows both these men so well, he will concede the honest sincerity of their convictions, even if he does not accept their conclusions. And as there are a very great many John and Paul Hardhands in this and

other countries, for the well-being of ourselves and themselves, for the public safety, perhaps we had better listen to the logic of their reasoning, kindly and logically refute it, or if we cannot refute it, join with them in asking and even insisting that some one else refute it, before it ruins us—if it be ruinous.

John began the discussion with a peculiarly modest and humiliated demeanor. He brought his hand down on Paul's knee with a gentle slap and began in a confidential tone, as if telling his brother something of which he was ashamed.

"Do you remember, Paul, my once telling you how on a certain occasion Mr. Opolee gave me much flattering praise for insisting that it was the duty of those having eyes to use them—to *see?*"

"I remember it, yes."

"And that though my suggestion was directly personal to him, yet he called it philosophy; and commended me to the work of writing a book on the subject; and that I call it 'A Philosophy of Progress,' or 'Eyes for the Blind,' or perhaps 'Progress by Sight.' Remember that too?"

"I do, and I never for a moment have doubted that his moral blindness and his selfishness were *both* his incurable afflictions."

"Paul,"—and John spoke so low that he almost whispered it,—"Paul, *I* was a blind leader of the blind. I was myself only a little less blind than he. He also saw cruelty and injustice abounding, but considered it the result of a natural and irrevocable law; a necessity of survival. I saw injustice, deplored it, desired to find a cure for it, and believed I had faithfully looked. And yet all unnoticed by me, the solution of

the problem lay right under my feet ; while I was charging the evil to various indefinite causes, all utterly inadequate, and gazing away off into the mists, awaiting, and seeking a coming Christ in the clouds, as a way and a means of establishing justice. If charity begins at home, does justice begin in the clouds? Mr. McAuliffe has come much nearer seeing the truth, for Mr. McAuliffe observes with sincere regret that peculiarly harmful power which exists and passes from one to another with the present form of title to land. He seems," continued John, "to see very clearly, that the title carries with it, not any power of production from the land,—for the land itself and the labor on it alone possess that power,—but that the one harmful power accompanying the title, and which gives to the present form of title its chief value, is its power to *take the productions* from the men, women, and little children, any or all who in the *using* of land, by their labor do *produce* good things. Ownership of that 'power to take the mutton' is ownership of *men* ; cloaked, innocently perhaps, under a title to land. A title to land, if it be shorn of its power to own and command men,—shorn of its power to appropriate their productions without rendering a just equivalent, is innocent, harmless, and, if it guarantees security of use and possession, is certainly beneficent. But its *speculative* selling value will be greatly decreased, its idle holding *investment* value will be gone, with the establishing of a just form of title. Nobody will speculate in men when men are free.

"If I own the power to take the productions of another man, I own all that is to me materially valuable in the man. Indeed that is the only valuable property in

a slave ; the power to take his productions. If I own the power to *use* land and take the productions of my *own* exertion from it, if in such ownership there is guaranteed security of property in my *productions*, and security of undisturbed *use* of land, such a land title is truly desirable and beneficent.

"A title to the right to *use* land is so radically different from a title to the right to neglect to use, to deny others the privilege of using, or to exact part or all of their product as the price of *permission* to use land, that the two forms of title are antipodal. Separated by all the difference between right and wrong, justice and injustice. I doubt if Mr. McAuliffe sees that truth in all its fullness," continued John, "though he sees the evil power in titles, and its evil use."

"What brought that peculiar logic into your reasoning?" inquired Paul. "I am certain that you cannot separate the right to use land from the right to keep others off from it. If others can come onto my land, having on it equal right with myself, what is to prevent them from taking my improvements and my productions upon it; the results of my labor? I think, John, we need greater security of right and title in what we *produce*, rather than less security in landownership."

"But, Paul, how can you produce anything over which to discuss property rights, without possessing any natural opportunity to produce? And what is land but the first, greatest, absolutely essential *opportunity*? The right to take the productions of other men; to take products, which you are anxious to secure as a property right to their producer, is the precise and only baleful feature of our present land titles; and gives to an idle non-user, a simple owner, power to do

exactly what you seem to think would be the consequence of a title of right to *use*.

"I was discussing with Thetty this morning the peculiarity of my sale of that lot to Johnson's foreman, Philip Fuller; and of the eight hundred and fifty dollars in money I received for it. He borrowed all but three hundred dollars of the money with which he paid me and executed a mortgage on the lot to the money-lender. I am in possession of that money. What part, if any part of the value which that money represents, did *I* produce? Not a cent's worth of its value, except that I have been one of the units in the great common host of men whose increasing needs for its use have increased its desirability and value. I no more, and precisely as much as each other individual has done, as Philip himself has done. But Philip, in order to acquire that space, has parted ownership in himself, to the extent of eight hundred and fifty dollars. And as the money-lender has, through Philip, paid me in advance, so now Philip must go on giving to that man the use of his life's labor, until that sum is returned to the lender, with interest, et cetera. My profitable property was not after all in the land, it was in my ownership of power to command and to sell Philip's labor for eight hundred dollars. I have secured eight hundred and fifty dollars which I never produced, but which Philip has yet got to produce by his labor, and to deliver to the man who has furnished the money for me."

"That only goes to show how very unjust *capital* is toward labor," Paul remarked.

"How, at least in this case, can you say that, Paul? The money which Jimmy Brown loaned to Philip for that purpose was the honest earnings of his,

Brown's, labor of producing clock-springs at Bristol. Clock springs,—goods,—good things which the world wants and is the better for having. *His* money, to give or lend, or in any way use or spend. But what did *I* produce and give to the world in exchange for the eight hundred dollars? My work in the factory, do you say? Because of my hard and faithful toil in New York do you say I am entitled to reward from Philip Fuller? What claim have I, in reward for that work, upon Philip Fuller, or Jimmy Brown, or upon any one else than upon they who gave me *work* and took all the *product* of my work? If they wronged me, does the fact give me the right to wrong Philip?"

"I don't see," replied Paul, with the embarrassment of conscious defeat, "I don't see that Philip is worse off for his purchase. He can sell again to-day for more than he paid, if he likes or is willing to do so."

"Which only proves," responded John, "that the power to rob goes with the title, and that if I, individually, were to sell the entire area included in the terms of the deed as I sold the lot to Kitty, it would not correct the evil nor strengthen the cause of humanity and justice at all. If it be possible—and I think it is possible—to take from title deeds that one peculiarly unjust power, the power to take labor's products without giving just equivalent, and to leave in the title deed the power to use and the guarantee of peaceable possession in use, no just complaint could be raised. For *use* is the only valuable service which land can yield to man; and the power to deny use, or to discourage using land, by taking without reward the product of its use, is certainly harmful; as it has the effect of diminishing the amount of good things pro-

duced in the world, and of also putting the larger part of them into the possession and enjoyment of those who, not having produced them, have no moral right to them. Philip has the same evil power, and Kitty too has the same power, if she chooses to use it, which I possessed before I passed the title to them. The slave-holding father did not remove nor mitigate the curse of slavery by selling his slaves, nor by giving them to his children, nor yet by personally giving them freedom. It required the sanction of state law, sanction of the law of his own state, other states or other governments,—Canada, as instance, to assure them liberty. The error was deeper than the individual. It was through legislative folly and crime written into constitutions and man-made laws. It required legislative correction. Legislative correction is likewise required to remove this more substantial form of enslavement which is embodied and empowered in that one evil feature of land titles. Through legislative correction of that mistake is the only open door to that freedom to live and be happy, which has inspired the hearts and heroism of men through all the ages of civilization."

"Yet, at the bottom of the whole problem, John," interrupted Paul, "there seems to me to rest the question of 'property rights'."

"Paul, my dear brother, you are so exceedingly anxious about and jealous of any interference with property rights, so keenly feel the necessity of financial security and all that, that it seems quite novel to me. You hardly seem to observe the fact that *you* have no property in the earth at all. And even more strange to me seems your jealousy of possible finan-

cial insecurity, when I consider that from all your faithful work, earnings, and savings, you have been able to save up only about five hundred dollars. Five hundred dollars ! Think of it ! Think of what you have produced with your busy hands guided by your inventive mind. Your first mechanical invention multiplied the products of a workman by twenty, and twelve of those machines were put into the factory where you work, and have been continuously employed there ever since. The man who owns your opportunity, and to whom you go for permission to work and live, advanced you the money, seventy-five dollars, with which to pay for your patent when, but not until, you consented to give him one-half interest in it. Then he bought the other half from you for one hundred dollars, and has sold factory rights alone to the amount of thirty-four thousand dollars. When, later, you made valuable improvements upon the device, he claimed and took them without rewarding you, because your time belonged to him, and he felt quite sure that you had done the thinking, while your time was *his property*, and you were his *hand*. All that interference with your property rights, all that helpless sufferance on your part, because you had no rights in the earth ; in the land of your country ; no place, nor opportunity, to work for yourself. Helplessly dependent upon your employer, what could you do but accept his terms? You talk of property rights, and seem always to associate them in your mind with land titles ; titles which may be made right, but which, in their present terms, involve the most absolute property *wrongs*."

"You do not understand me, John," replied Paul, "though I confess that I discover now what I have

never heretofore so clearly seen,—that among the many beneficent features of land titles, is to be found also that one terribly *unjust* feature. But let me explain to you that what I mean by *property rights*, is exactly expressed in the declaration,—‘to the producer, belongs the product.’ To my mind, that claim appears just in principle and beneficent in results, and may be accepted as a rule of judgment.”

“Quite true;” interrupted John. “I admit the justice of that claim, and as we are agreed on that point, there remains to establish a just conclusion, only the duty to find who and where the producer is. God, by the exercise of his intelligent creative power, has *produced* the natural earth; into which He has embodied His attribute of beneficence; a part of Himself. Hence, the natural earth is His. I, as an individual man, child and creature of the Creator, with delegated power and delegated freedom of will, am enabled, and commanded, ‘in the sweat of my brow’ to take of the materials of the earth, separate them, combine them, and by my labor so modify and change them as to adapt them to meet the needs, and satisfy the desires of myself and my fellow-men. To ‘create things needful.’ The good things I thus *produce*, you would insist are mine. I agree with you. They *are*, morally mine; naturally mine; justly mine; by virtue of the fact that I produced them. Mine by the same law of right that declares the earth, the natural earth ‘is the Lords.’ That is what I call ‘a property right,’ as truly as ‘liberty,’ is a life right.”

“If organized society, consisting of all individuals collectively,—community, if that word better expresses the thought,—if community, by the common needs of all

its members, creates and develops any value separated and distinctive from the wealth which is produced by individual labor, then, by your own argument, Paul, such value must be, in right and equity, the property of community."

Paul was already convinced, but desired to dismount from his strident dogmatic form of discussion gracefully, and to adopt his brother's safer line of reasoning.

"I had my attention drawn to that equity, John," Paul replied, "by that Scarborough Park scheme. Alanson Lord purchased the park site for seven thousand dollars. He did nothing on it, produced nothing from it, and having produced nothing, had no just property right in it other than to the return of the idle capital he had chosen to exchange for it; capital which may have been the former productions of his personal industry. He also owned two entire blocks, fronting upon the park site; do you remember that fact, John?" Paul asked,

"I do," John replied, "I do, very distinctly; and I also know that increase of population, wealth production, and the need for use of that park site, by the people of Scarborough, doubled its value during the first year after he acquired title to the site. The desire and the imminent need, for its use by the people of that vicinity,—the community,—so greatly increased its value, that Mr. Lord, by simply being in possession of the power to prevent its use and to hold the site in unimproved idleness, was enabled to exact and to take from the common-unity, the community, of Scarborough, twenty-one thousand dollars. Except that he was one unit among the common host of individuals that had produced a common value in which they had a com-

mon right,—I would like to have you tell me, if you can, what Mr. Lord had done to *produce* that park site value. Not having produced it, was the right in it proper to him; *his* property right? No! community created it all;—and it belonged to its creator, the community. And yet it is true that ‘the law’ obliged the community to pay, through their municipal government, to one individual member of community, the purchase price of permission to use and enjoy the site *value* which the community had created. A peculiar value, which no single individual ever has or ever can create. The community of Scarborough people paid twenty-one thousand dollars, for his consent to their use of *their own property*.

“That ‘statute law’ is a serious error. And again; when they had purchased the property from Mr. Lord, the first value-creating service of the park, was to increase the desirability of his property adjoining and about it. This new, beautiful and to be further beautified park had the immediate effect of increasing the rental value and the selling price of Lord’s property fronting upon it, threefold.

“He sold, or rented, and put that *increase* also into his pocket with the twenty-one thousand dollars. I want to emphasize the fact that he was enabled to exact from the people the price or the value which they, not he, had given to the park site. Next, he was enabled to exact from purchasers and tenants, every dollar of increased value which the presence and enjoyment of the people’s park had added to his park-fronting property. The entire community was taxed to pay *him* for the value which their park added to his land. The direct, valuable benefit of the park was allowed to

be given freely to him, and he sells or leases those special privileges to his sole private gain. They paid and they continue to pay to him, *not* to the City government, a great price for the privilege of enjoying and using the air and beauty of the City Park. It is not difficult in fact nor logic to prove to whom a thing belongs after we have discovered its producer, and learned whether the producer has been given an equivalent in exchange. My conviction of the true measure of property right, in its essence and application, would justly ‘give unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that be God’s.’ The people of this country have been so busy with their personal affairs, and are now so filled with the anxieties and needs of their private life, with the bitterness of their personal poverty and misery, as to be heedless, dangerously heedless, of public affairs,—government, society, and the legislation of statute and constitutional laws. We have an unworthy habit of accepting law as being gospel, without even questioning it. Lawmakers are more cognizant of this prevailing weakness of the masses than are other men. Hence, our lawmakers are the more careless in their work, or if careful, careful to work in the interest of personal advantage, of special privileges, and the result is——”

There was a loud knock at the door, Katy opened it, and her father entered with Teddy McGurk immediately in his wake.

“Old Bat” was pale. His wrinkled, browned hands trembled with agitation, as they hung down beside him. Without a word of greeting, he said hurriedly : “B’ys, let yees coom wud me dhis minnut down te Jimmy Hays’ house. He’s kilt his-self wud a pishtol.”

"Yes," put in Teddy, "an' Mrs. Hays is a dyin' too wid de fright, an' de young uns a screechin' like mad."

And away went the four, leaving Katy and Thetty to nervously worry and wonder what it all meant.

"What do you suppose made Jimmy Hays kill himself?" Thetty asked. "He seemed to be a steady, industrious, quiet fellow, always at home when not at his work; did he and Annie ever quarrel?"

"Bless you, Thetty, no, not that I ever heard," Kitty answered; "they seemed as devoted to each other as lovers. He was almost boastful of 'his Annie,' as he called her, and she—why, she told me not two months ago how she had pawned the emerald ring that used to be her mother's and slyly bought some flannels so as to surprise Jim with them when the winter came, for she said he didn't have any all last winter, and pretended he didn't care for them; though she guessed he would wear these to please *her*. Poor fellow won't need them now, will he? Father was telling me the other day," continued Katy, "that when Annie was so sick two months ago, Jimmy was kept home two or three days to care for her, and they put his name on what they call the 'fresh list'; the same as if he was a new beginner. If work is dull, and any one is to be laid off, they lay off those on the 'fresh list' first. I know father was afraid for Jim, and he said that what with lost time, medicine for Annie and doctor's fees he was deeply in debt, and could not seem to catch up again. Perhaps they laid him off, and he got crazed with discouragement."

"Was he ever given to drink?" asked Thetty.

"Not that I ever heard," Katy replied, continuing : "What will poor Annie do? I think that if it were my Paul, I would die too. It seems to me that I could not live."

"Annie will have to go to the mills herself if she lives through it and take Tommy there too—he is fourteen, I think—and leave eleven-year-old Mamie to take care of the kitchen and the three little ones ; it's a terrible condition to be left in, isn't it, Katy?"

John came rushing excitedly in for some needed things and said, "Come right down now, Thetty, quickly as you can. Annie is dying, just as Teddy feared—perhaps is dead now."

"How was it? What was it? Why did he do it?" asked Thetty, in her fright and confusion.

And John replied with almost a sob, "Another heart failure—not heart of flesh, but heart of hope! They hav'n't a loaf of bread in the house. He was laid off two weeks ago ; he blew his brains out; *there would have been one more child to feed if Annie had lived until to-morrow.*'

Old Mr. McAuliffe entered, in time to hear John's closing sentence. "Yes," said he, "yes, peace to her soul. She's sev'd from dhe deadly sin she kem near commiten two months ago. 'Tis a cryin' shame that dhe childer God sinds into dhe worruld are not welcome ; trown back. An' it isn't fer dhe lack o' modther-love ; even dhe bastes has dhat. But no modther kin long stand seein' the sufferin' o' dhe haarts as has once beat wid dhe pulse o' her own. No modther kin see dhe pleading eyes o' her helpless childer, an' be helpless to help dhim, without wishin' to take dhim wid her out o' a worruld wher dhey are not wel-

come an' no chance or place in it fer dhim to live but be beggin' fer it. May Hiven purchect dhe poor from dhe greed o' min', and from dhe temptation o' evil-doin'. No father kin long endure lookin at dhe childer that look to him for help whin so be as he can't help dhim. Poor Jimmy Hays wus crowded out ; dhey didn't shtop wid takin' dhe mutton but tuk dhe potatees an' dhe wan pig as well."

"Ah," cried Katy, with a tone of justifiable pride, "the Church, *our* Church, bitterly condemns shutting the doors against them, or sending back the little ones, when they come."

But to this boast, John replied, "'Tis a pity the Church doesn't more earnestly work to remove,—I was about to say, the *necessity*,—I *will* say, the nearly irresistible *temptation* to this crime, by removing the cause for it. By helping to secure to every child which God sends into this life the opportunity which He has prepared to maintain its life, and which beneficent provision He has made bountiful, and more than sufficient, before He sends each new image of Himself into the world."

Kind reader, patient follower with me through the common-life history of the plain people of our story, having seen and studied the *cause* of their impoverishment of body and soul, you have yourself discovered the remedy for such evil consequences of an evil cause. You know that the remedy is to *remove the cause*. You have discovered a way out of this hell of undeserved poverty ; a way of deliverance from this unwilling idleness of willing men amid a very plethora of God-given natural opportunities for honest thrift. Surely, you will demand equality of right to the use and enjoyment of

God's gifts, for all men. You will insist upon the sanctity of the universal right to equal *justice*. You will not silently permit the robbery of many for the enrichment of few, nor tolerate the pretense of atonement for such a crime, by gifts given in "*charity*" (?) to the robbed, from the very plundered treasure of which they have been despoiled. *You* at least think, see and know whether the coin before you be God's or Cæsar's. You will righteously judge it.

For revenue with which to maintain the "people's government," shall we not collect that *one particular valuable product* of all "the people"—the value of natural opportunities? A value to which we all have equal right and which if used for the expenses of government and returned to all equally in the benefits of government cannot be correctly called a tax—for it will be no burden and will not diminish wealth, as the payment of a tax on the products of personal industry unavoidably does.

Shall we continue discouraging thrift, by taxing the good things that the industrious produce? Or shall we leave the product untaxed, to use and enjoyment by its producer?

Are you that person of rare content whom tolerated injustice *seems* to prosper? Ah,—my brother in very kinship of disappointment in our pursuit of happiness—we cannot catch the ever distant *ignis fatuus* we have foolishly followed and thought was happiness, which glimmers in the fogs lying over the miserable marshes of injustice. You have life-duties other than "looking out for yourself." Sometimes you are obliged to look *in* upon yourself. It is a lonely disappointing sight. You realize how much you need your neighbor. You

realize that you owe to your neighbor a sacred duty which you have left undone ; and that its neglect has harmed you and its consequences have raised the hand of your neighbor against you threateningly.

“To harm him,—is to harm thyself ; and so
Remember : Thou art thy brother’s keeper.”

THE END.



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